■ ENTERTAINMENT/A2-1
Cherry Pie plans foundation for juvenile justice

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Marinduque: Butterfly Capital of the Philippines

■ SPORTS/A29
Strange goes wire-to-wire; Pagunsan 6th

■ LIFESTYLE/C1
30-foot Marian statue rises in Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, May 29, 2006 ** 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 170 P18 www.inq7.net

105-year-old zarzuela revived in Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—AGA KATIPUNERO AMARIÑO: Proceso Fabian Ilyrac did not only take up arms against Spain, he rebelled against tradition by writing a zarzuela in Kapampangan, the language of the common folk.

Fabian Ilyrac's zarzuelas, which were popular

105-YEAR-OLD ZAR

No, they didn't name their baby Brangelina

LOS ANGELES—THE Jolie-Pitt baby has arrived—and no, they didn't name her Brangelina.

Thousands of kilometers from Hollywood but still within easy reach of celebrity hype, Angelina Jolie gave birth to Shiloh

NO. THIS A

Phivolcs: RP must prepare for big one

'We must accept likelihood of strong quakes'

By Jerry E. Esplanada

PHILIPPINE EXPERTS GRAPPLING with the mysteries of earthquakes yesterday said the devastating tremor that struck Indonesia was not a cause for alarm and that the key to preventing disasters earthquakes bring was to anticipate and prepare for them.

Renato Solidum Jr., director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), told the Inquirer that what happened in Indonesia's central Java and nearby Pacific islands also hit by quakes yesterday did not mean similar occurrences would follow in the Philippines.

"It's not a cause for alarm. Different countries have different earthquake generators in their respective boundaries. Those generators move continuously like our generators," he said in an interview.

That the Philippines lies in the Pacific "Ring of Fire"—a region prone to volcanic eruptions and quakes—should also not cause sleepless nights.

"Yes, it is something to worry about, not with a sense of panic but concern, so that we can prepare for a big earthquake in advance," the Phivolcs chief said.

"We need to have a culture of not only the knowledge of what might happen, but also the culture of preparedness."

Not taking any chances, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered all disaster monitoring and management agencies "to team up with the private sector to updating and gearing up our contingency plans for any untoward threats or events."

"We must act to help others, and be prepared on our own, in times of need," she said.

Solidum said "the key" to effective disaster prevention was planning, "and the only way

PHIVOLCS A12

VILLAGERS carry the remains of an earthquake victim during a mass burial in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. At least 4,300 people were killed and thousands injured when an earthquake rocked the densely populated island of Java on Saturday.

Temblors jolt Papua, Babuyan, Tonga isles

JAKARTA—THE PACIFIC's volatile "Ring of Fire" yesterday unleashed three more earthquakes, a day after a temblor in Indonesia left more than 4,300 dead in one of the world's most seismically active regions.

The quakes shook the South Pacific nations of Papua New Guinea and Tonga less than half an hour of each other on Sunday morning.

A third temblor rattled the Babuyan islands at 5 p.m. in northern Luzon. (See story on Page A12.)

Although the quakes in Papua New Guinea and Tonga were as powerful as that which hit the central Indonesian island of Java, there were no reports of deaths or subsequent tsunamis.

The first quake, with a magnitude of 6.2, struck 180 km off the coast of New Britain, an island off Papua New Guinea's northwest coast, at 1:12 p.m. (0312 GMT).

The second quake hit the coast of Tonga, about 4,000 km and several time zones away, at 4:36 p.m. (0336 GMT). The US Geological Survey recorded that quake at a magnitude of 6.7.

Barry Hirshorn, a geophysicist with Hawaii's Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, said the two quakes posed no risk of a Pacific-wide tsunami and were unlikely to be related.

"They're probably unrelated, they just happened at the same time," Hirshorn said.

Another geophysicist at the center, Victor Sardina, said he believed the earthquakes were unrelated to the magnitude-6.3 quake that leveled hundreds of buildings and killed thousands of

TEMBLORS A12

Her last words were 'Daddy, Daddy'

BANTUL, INDONESIA—HIS daughter was still breathing when Rustiana dug her out of the ruins of his house. But the 8-year-old died in his arms as he waited for treatment at a hospital overflowing with the injured.

"Her last words were 'Daddy, Daddy'," Rustiana said as he took a break from searching in the ruins of his quake-devastated house for salvageable items. "I have to start my life from zero again."

Thousands of exhausted and grieving survivors yesterday dug through their crumpled homes, searching for clothes, food and valuables after a powerful earthquake killed more than 4,300 people in central Indonesia.

The magnitude-6.3 quake struck early Saturday and injured thousands more in the heart of the densely populated island of Java. The country's worst disaster since the 2004 tsunami also stoked fears that a nearby rumbling volcano could erupt and cause further damage to the world-famous 9th century Prambanan temple.

The disaster zone stretched across hundreds of square kilometers of mostly farming communities in Yogyakarta province. The worst devastation was in the town of Bantul, where more than 2,480 people were killed and 80 percent of the homes were flattened.

HER LAST! A22

Killings show military influence in GMA admin rising

By Amando Doronila

THE CURRENT WAVE OF KILLINGS OF leftist activists and journalists follows a pattern that makes it different from and more sinister in its political implications than previous crime waves of the past 50 years.

It reveals an impatient administration that is not only hostage to invisible death squads but more so one that has lost control over the most important function of government—to ensure the life and security of its citizens, regardless of their political color.

There are ominous signs that the wave of killings suggests that right-wing extremists have captured government security policy.

ANALYSIS

An examination of the past pattern of killings demolishes the claim of police authorities that the murders of no less than 800 activists since 2001 and more than 70 journalists since 1986 cannot be stopped because the crime wave has

KILLINGS A6

65 Pinoys bring home tales of terror from East Timor

By Nikko Dizon

GUNFIRE, BUILDINGS IN FLAMES, Gangs roaming around with machetes and bows and arrows. And, finally, uncertainty.

These were what drove 65 Filipinos out of East Timor and prompted them to fly back home to the Philippines yesterday, some of them in tears.

"It was so scary. They themselves were killing each other. Some of them even had machetes and bows and arrows," Virgilio Manlapaz, 50, said in Filipino as he recounted to the Inquirer his nightmare in the world's youngest nation.

65 PINOYS A11

RIVERA: Environmental reporting

DARIOY: Editorial cartooning

PDI reporter, cartoonist get Asian publishers' awards

HONG KONG—FOR HER REPORTING on the Rapu-Rapu mine's waste spill and for his drawings reflecting significant Asian events, Inquirer reporter Blanche S. Rivera and editorial cartoonist Gilbert Darioy won honorable mention honors at the gala dinner for the 2006 Sopa (Society of Publishers in Asia) Awards For Editorial Excellence.

There were only two winners for each award category. The winner of the prize and the honorable mention.

Rivera was cited for environmental reporting and Darioy for editorial car-

PDI REPORTER A6

A2
WEATHER FORECAST
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE

Abduction of Erap 5 imperils terror law

By TJ Burgonio

THE FATE OF THE CENTENNIAL tax measure bill now hangs in the balance in the Senate after some senators expressed alarm over the "Erapnap-like" abduction of five supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Some senators are now having "serious thoughts" about its early passage and are taking a long and hard look at the bill, particularly its provisions giving law enforcers leeway to wiretap, arrest and detain individuals on suspicion of terrorism.

Sen. Gregorio Camenia II first raised objections to its early approval while the senators were grilling top military officials about the abduction of five leaders of the pro-Estrada Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice during the month's budget plenary debates.

"I was about to support its passage but [Wednesday's] abduction [of Erap supporters] changed my mind," Camenia said.

As shown by the case of the five Erap supporters, he said the possibility of government agents stretching the limits of the bill to "persecute innocent civilians" was not far-fetched.

"I have always objected to the broader definition [of terrorism] because of the positive fact of our law enforcement agencies, he is the PNP/NBI or AFP to stretch the definition," he said.

"If we give them an inch, they may take a mile in order that they may use the law to persecute innocent civilians."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the "Erapnap-like" arrest, detention and torture of the five had sparked fears human rights violations would resurface once the anti-terrorism law was implemented.

"This will definitely affect the passage of the measure. We don't have any intention to, but for some elements of body are already behaving as if the country is under a fascist rule," he said, referring to the intelligence director of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, the sponsor of the bill that seeks to define the crime of terrorism by enumerating its elements on Tuesday, paving the way for debates on the floor.

On the same day, the wounded families of Rufino Ubanan, Virgilio Garcinado, Dennis Roma, Jim Louie Cabanatan and PO3 Jose Jun Cuenseng sought the senators' help in reaching their whereabouts.

The five were picked up Monday by military and police agents who barged into Bonanpatrol home in Quezon City on suspicion they were planning to assassinate members of the Cabinet. They were dragged into a waiting vehicle, blindfolded and taken to different safe houses.

DOH warns against onset of rainy season diseases

By Christian V. Esguerra

DENGUE, DIARRHEA AND LEPTOSPIROSIS.

With summer about to end, the public should watch out for these diseases, along with acute respiratory infections like the flu and pneumonia. These ailments normally strike during the rainy season, the Department of Health has warned.

The country just came from a bad dengue season which drowned at least 21,817 people last year. The number exceeded the 20,000 cases originally projected by health officials.

From January to the first week of April this year, the disease recorded 3,794 dengue cases, representing 45 percent of the total number of cases recorded during the same period last year.

Acute infectious ailment

"Dengue is an acute infectious disease brought about by the bite of the Aedes mosquito that breeds in clean and stagnated water found in flower vases, cans, old rubber tires, used bottles, among other containers," the DOH said in an advisory.

Another serious disease is leptospirosis, caused by bacteria entering the skin through open wounds. It's usually contracted from vegetables, moist soil or floodwaters contaminated with rat urine.

"Signs and symptoms include fever, muscle pain and headaches. When severe, leptospirosis may affect the liver, kidneys or the brain," according to the DOH.

Big leap

From January to the first week of April this year, the disease inflicted 111 people. It's a big leap from the 49 cases reported in 2005.

Then there's diarrhea. It becomes serious when a person develops "watery stools at least three times a day," according to the DOH.

"This is often accompanied by vomiting, elevation imbalance and dehydration, which can be fatal if not treated early," it said in the advisory.

Dehydration symptoms

"Signs and symptoms of dehydration are sunken eyeballs and fontanel in children, dry lips, excessive thirst and poor skin turgor. (When pinched, skin with normal turgor snaps back to position. Skin with decreased turgor remains elevated—a sure sign of dehydration.). Diarrhea is a food-borne disease that can be acquired through ingestion of food and water contaminated with fecal material.

"To prevent diarrhea, the DOH recommends ensuring a safe water supply, the sanitary disposal of human waste and the practice of personal hygiene."

UN: Humans more likely spreaders of avian influenza

THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULture Organization (FAO) said it was unacceptable to blame wild birds as the source of H5N1 or bird flu in the absence of rigorous research into their role in the ecology and dynamics of the virus.

"Human activities not birds are more likely to spread the virus," the FAO said in a statement posted last week on its website at www.fao.org.

Avian or bird flu is a very contagious disease caused by viruses that normally infect only birds. But the virus has since mutated and it is now causing infections and even deaths in poultry and humans.

The FAO said it had been calling for more research on the deadly virus as early as 2004, "but sufficient resources had been allocated to be able to study the question properly."

Joseph Domenech, FAO's chief veterinary officer, explained that with the rapid spread of the disease, FAO now needed $300 million (P15.3 billion) for its coordination to the global program for the progressive control of avian influenza over the next three years—more than twice the sum required a few months ago.

"To date, FAO has only received $75 million ($1.5 billion)," he said.

Domenech claimed that the current avian flu crisis was "likely to be a continuing emergency that will last several years."

The FAO expressed serious concern that international interest had been focused almost exclusively on the possibility of avian flu hitting human populations to the neglect of its potentially devastating impact on poultry and other animals.

"The little to recognize that the best way to protect people is to control and try to eradicate the disease in animals," Domenech said.

The FAO admitted that avian influenza was a complex issue in which wild birds had sometimes been identified as the culprits.

"It is indeed likely that they can introduce the disease to unaffected areas—but countries in which the disease has already been identified—but the disease is spread through the human activities of poultry production, improper hygiene and uncontrolled commercialization," the UN agency said. Zeffie Abdillahi/ER, PIO Searborn Luzon Bureau

Oil firms hike prices anew

CITING HIGHER WORLD OIL PRICES, OIL firms raised gasoline and kerosene prices by 50 centavos per liter following similar adjustments by the country's two oil refiners.

Chevron Philippines Corp. increased prices at 6 a.m. yesterday, while Total (Philippines) Corp. increased prices at 12:01 a.m. today.

The rise of five the adjusted liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) price by 26 centavos per kilogram, inclusive of the 12-percent value-added tax.

Seven oil players found Petroleum Corp. also raised gasoline and kerosene prices at 12:01 a.m. today. United Petroleum Philippines Inc. followed suit at 6 a.m.

Like refiners Petron Corp. and Philippine Shell Petroleum Corp., the four oil firms increased the price of diesel, in an effort to help the public transport sector.

Data from the Department of Energy showed that the regional benchmark Dubai crude oil increased to $65.55 a barrel as of May 19 from last month's $64.14 a barrel. Abigail Kit

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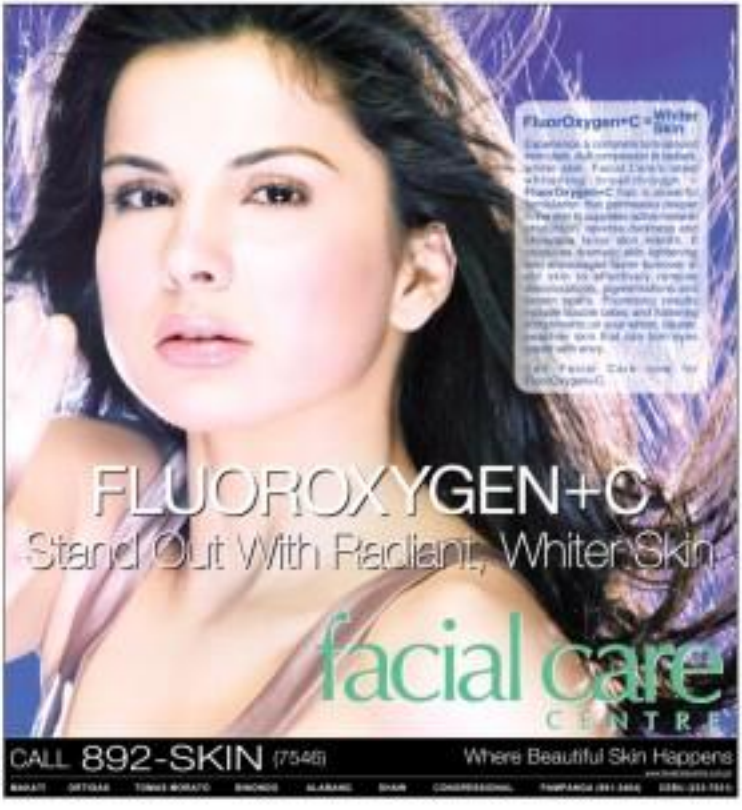

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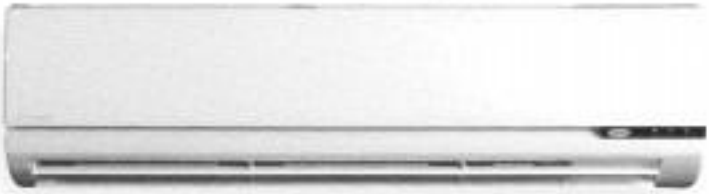

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De Venecia in Japan to press for resumption of loans

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA flew to Japan on Wednesday on a mission that President Macapagal-Arroyo hopes will win $90 million (P4.2 billion) in Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the country.

The Japanese grants and yen package loans have been frozen since Ms Arroyo assumed office in 2001.

Before De Venecia left for Tokyo, he told reporters the ODA grants "would be restored," and it was the President herself who was taking "decisive steps" to restore them.

He said the yen-denominated loans could be utilized for urgent infrastructure and to fund the country's antipoverty programs and create thousands of jobs.

De Venecia also said his delegation gave instructions for the payment of P70 million to Japanese construction companies in order to complete the refund of value-added taxes collected from VAT-exempt companies.

The $600-$800 million in loans from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) represent a major source of capital funds for the Philippines with 20 to 40 years repayment at less than 1 percent per annum.

The Speaker called Japan the Philippines' "biggest provider" of ODA and a major source of foreign direct investment.

His official trip to Japan, which Philippine Ambassador Domingo L. Siazon Jr. arranged, came on the heels of the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan.

Yesterday De Venecia, accompanied by his wife Gina and a delegation from the House, opened a five-day official visit widely call to rappel by a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and an audience with the Japanese Emperor. Michael Lim Ubac

Pork barrel tool against impeachment, claims solon

WITH OVER TWO MONTHS TO GO BEFORE a second impeachment bid could be filed by the opposition, Malacañang is once again relying on the weapon under its control to win in lawmakers and ensure the defeat of the next attempt to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo—the pork barrel.

Opposition Rep. Rodolfo Plaza of the lone district of Agusan del Sur said Malacañang had deliberately blocked the release of the pork barrel funds of lawmakers for this year ahead of the coming impeachment attempt in July.

In an interview yesterday, Plaza said Malacañang had been withholding the P60 million each of members of the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) since January.

The PDAF, popularly known as pork barrel, is given in the form of Special Allotment Release Orders (SAROS) and Notice of Cash Allocations (NCAs).

But this time what is being withheld is not the pork barrel of members of the minority, according to Plaza.

"Malacañang is really pulling a fast one on members of the majority," Plaza said, explaining that this "clever tactic" would ensure the allegiance of the majority coalition in the lower chamber.

"Malacañang will withdraw the SARO when impeachment is inevitable, so that the congressmen can't ask for more. If it releases the SAROs this early, the congressmen will ask for additional pork barrel," he said.

House majority members, whose SAROs and NCAs were actually the first to be released, have been grumbling over the delay in the PDAF releases since March.

"That all they received were promises," said Plaza.

Under the reformed PDAF, each of the 226 congressmen will receive P60 million in yearly allocations, usually given in four tranches, or one at every end of the quarter.

Although the 2006 budget has yet to be passed by the Senate and signed into law by the President, lawmakers could already draw on their congressional allocations because the 2005 budget was reenacted in January.

The proposed 2006 budget reinstates the original amount of P70 million for each congressman, but Deputy Minority Leader Eulogio Rodriguez Bulls said the amount could go up to P75 million.

Last week, Suplico claimed that House majority members had been budgeting the opposition to file the impeachment complaint in January against Malacañang. Michael Lim Ubac

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No, they didn't name their baby Brangelina

By Inquirer AP

Pitt's daughter on Sunday in Africa. PHOTO COURTESY

Pitt's daughter on Sunday in Africa. PHOTO COURTESY

Pitt's daughter on Sunday in Africa. PHOTO COURTESY

105-year-old zarzuela revived

Kasaysayan 1

theatrical entertainment at the time, featured characters based on ordinary people. He also developed stories around family themes such as love, domestic quarrels and jealousy.

Pablan Byron's "Ingkwentong" (The Writer), first staged on Sept. 25, 1900, at the Teatro Solis on 16 Bersales, Binondo, that became the first zarzuela in the vernacular in the Philippines.

The significance of the first was noted by the late literary historian Bonifacio Ichon Gaston in his 1981 book, "Literature of the Pampangos."

"Ing Mananggol" a older from the best-known Tagalog zarzuela, "Walang Sugat," by Severo de Rivera and the Kapampangan zarzuela, "Along Dios," by Juan Crisostomo Soto, according to Bobby Flordeliza, executive director of the Holy Angel University's (HAU) Center for Kapampangan Studies.

Young Byron's talent at the Hil. Featured the legacy of Pablan Byron by restaging the 105-year-old zarzuela on Saturday as part of National Heritage Month.

The zarzuela centered on the domestic quarrel between couple Doña Asuna and Don Hugo and was interspersed with comic relief from the family's servants. The feud was resolved to the end with the help of the couple's child, Simatong.

Flordeliza said the production had one simple goal—to allow the modern audience to "see [the play] as was uncovered for it."

The Center for Kapampangan Studies, the Diwang Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Aliphon Heritage Festival Inc., chaired by Ronald Henares, produced the play.

Miracle

Staging the humorous "Ing Mananggol" in this day and age was about of a miracle since very little of the script survived.

According to the producers, Comelio Pablan Byron's brother, published the script on May 28, 1900.

Decades later, in 1961, researchers like Eliseo Arellano studied the texts. Then R.V. Carunungan scraped the script in new Pampango orthography (discarding the letters c, f, j, q, v, x, and z) and Ichon Gaston printed the entire 11-scene-in-three anthology.

The problem was in the musical scoring. The surviving text failed to document the original music and lyrics by Amado Gustavo David and the one staged in short-shot was rescued from Mr. Pinatubo's lahar in 1991 were faded and tattered beyond recognition.

The difficult task of reconstructing the live songs fell on the shoulders of Rodolfo "Tatar" Palma, a member of the family behind the "Orchestra Filipina."

From memory

The Palma clan, beginning with Rizal's great grandfather Pablo Palma and grandfather Teodoro Palma, had been the music arrangers in Bacolor's Teatro Zaldua and Gaspar's Teatro Titong Bel'arena (1900 and 1922).

Tatar, 66, said his connection with the past was never lost.

He kept in touch with Nestor Galvan, great grandson of Julio Cuhay-Hugon, a contemporary of Pablakan Byron and Soto. Galvan also collected materials on opera.

Members of the Palma clan gather every year on Holy Thursday to rehearse for the Good Friday procession. The cast of three musicians, from behind the vanda, first, Virgilio Palma, to do a current (humming or playing of songs based on memories of hearing their elders performing it).

As the melodies took form, Sison and his consultant Galvan to validate the compositions.

Next, Sison recovered the lyrics through Galvan's recollection of what his great grandfather had passed on to him.

Unity

The Pilipino Gakyo ramion told the groundwork for the successful revamping by asking student artist Alfredo Salvador to perform the play during the town's La Feast Bista in December 2005.

The May 26 restaging of the "Ing Mananggal" at the HAU did not have the full orchestra (count of violins that carried the melody, a guitar and bass). But what assembled 16 violinists for the occasion, with his 76-year-old daughter Cynthia-Marie Palma, a fifth-generation artist, among the musicians.

Through Cynthia's help, Rumajia Lacson (playing Doña Asuna) and Rosa Reyes (playing Simatong) mastered the melody.

"I hope the play will be a uniting factor for us Kapampangan," Sison said, explaining why he took on the task.

His town's, once the Philippines' capital, was buried by volcanic mudflow in 1991, losing most of it to the disaster until 1997. The residents remained scattered in at least seven resettlements but some 7,000 families have refused to settle permanently.

Preserve culture

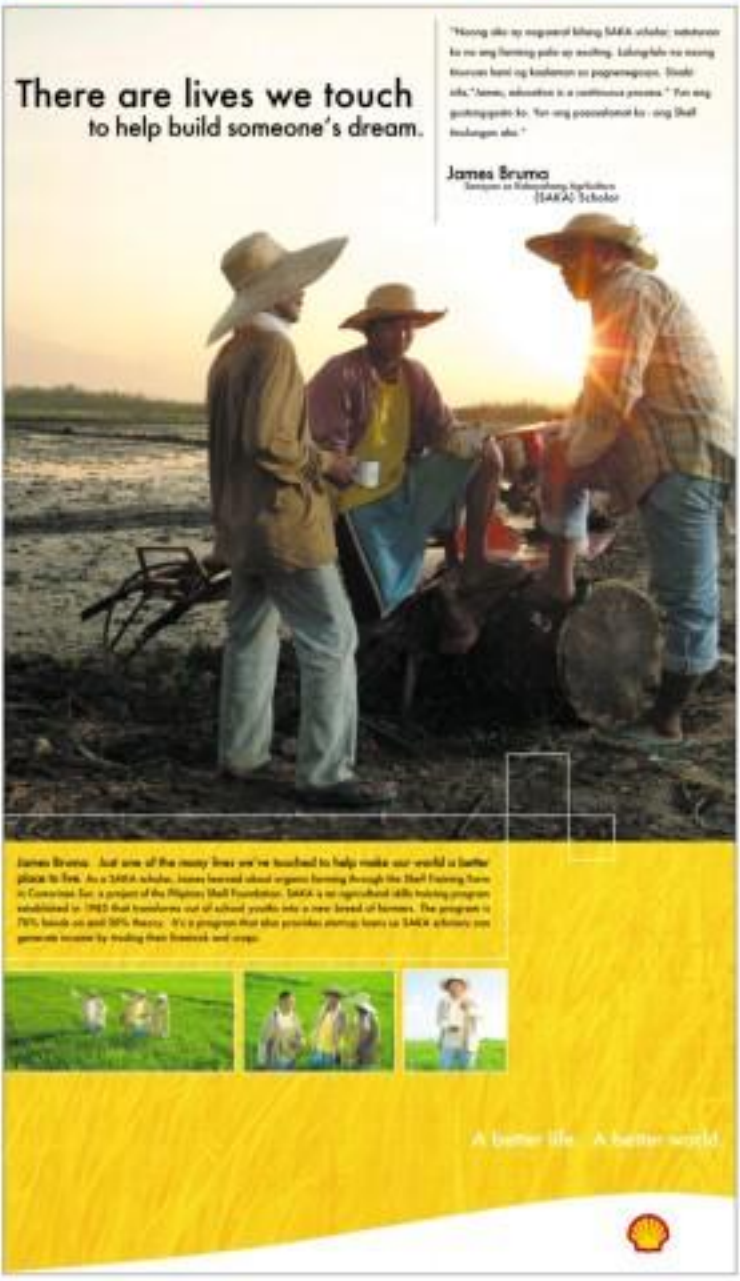
Harper said more works should be resurged and Filipino arts and culture, on the whole, should be preserved as these are in "greater danger" of being erased or forgotten due to the threats of globalization.

"Culture connects the past and the future," Harper said, just before lights dashed the stage for the open-air performances.

The play will go on tour in campuses and communities around Pampanga, said Tiongson.

The modern cast—Lacson, Reyes, Edgar John Dumpit—Don Ilogot Bolinger Cabling (Pamela) and Daniel Magbanobanua Pablo—said they hope to equal if not surpass the zarzuela's maiden performance 105 years ago which featured Paula Quizon, Carmen Alfonso, Teodoro Arellano, Dionisio Magtanol and Ignacio Nicolasa.

The difficult task, they said, was to master the language of the time that Pablakan Byron,



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PDI reporter, cartoonist cited

Peter page A1

scoring at the awards night held in Hong Kong on Thursday.

A third Filipino, former bureau chief in business reporter Elena Sorreyes, were running for the Hong Kong-based Asia Business Journal, taking the local Journalist Award.

Sorreyes, who covers the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, was cited for her stories of stories on the mine spill that led to the closure of the Lafayette mining operations on Poro Bago Island to Albay.

The series of stories was published six months before the Bago-Bago dam flooding commission released its report recommending the closure of the mine and a review of the Philippine Mining Act.

Sorreyes's stories came out in the Inquirer in November 2005.

Elena's work honors for his cartoons on the December 2004 tsunami that struck Asian countries and killed about 300,000 people, and on the Burma (Myanmar) issue in the Amsterdam of Sanchez Asian Nations.

Awards were given in 17 categories in each of three divisions—regional publications, large magazines and English wire services (Division 4); for local newspapers and small magazines in English (E), and for Chinese-language publications (C).

NYT file was honorable mention for her coverage of the Lafayette mining accident in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

Both Inquirer awards were won in Division 6.

Clear, informative writing

Sorreyes won the top journalist award, which covered all three divisions, for what a judge described as her "clear and informative writing that helps the readers see and understand the subject."

The other categories included excellence in business reporting, human rights reporting, news photography and features, as well as opinion writing, magazine cover design, special issue, explanatory reporting, public service journalism, reporting of breaking news and the scoop award.

The awardees were honored at a dinner at JW Marriot Hotel here.

Keynote speaker Anson Chan, Hong Kong's former chief secretary for administration, made a strong pitch for press freedom and free flow of information in the former British colony under the concept of "one country, two systems."

Post dominates

Once-muzzled Internet giant Yahoo Inc giving information on web users that led to the arrest of journalist in the China mainland.

Hong Kong's dominant newspaper,the South China Morning Post, which won the environmental reporting and editorial cartooning awards, dominated Division 4, topping nine of 17 categories.

The Financial Times won five awards and Time Asia took four of 17 categories in Division 6.

The Society of Publishers in Asia was founded in 1982 to foster cooperation and understanding among its members.

Media's vitality

The Sopa awards were established in 1999 to pay tribute to excellence in work in the region's vital and now media and encourage results in the region.

Nancy Siahaan, Filipino chair of the Sopa and managing director of the South China Morning Post, said the record number of entries this year "signifies to us both the vitality of Asia's publishing industry and the strong commitment of regional journalists to editorial excellence in an increasingly competitive media environment."

Record entries

A record number of 457 entries from across the region were entertained by a board of judges made up of 80 journalists, editors and academics from top national and regional media and top universities in Asia.

"We had a remarkably strong collection of winning entries this year, which shows that the dynamic increase in the overall number of submissions for Sopa awards is being accompanied by a commensurate rise in overall quality," said David Hunt, Sopa director of judges from the University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre.

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House set to address attendance problem

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NOW seems to do something about absentee members' habit "playing the dumbest."

But how far can it go?

Administration lawmakers on Friday backed House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles' move to "solicit" absentee members by imposing disciplinary action on [them] who frequently fail to attend plenary sessions and committee hearings.

House Deputy Speaker Gloria Arroyo and Deputy Majority Leader Antonio Cuelllar said it was time the House cracked the whip on its errant congressmen who failed to perform their primary task of overseeing legislation.

They believed that imposing decisive and positive action on absentee members would help the House regain the public's trust and respect.

Nograles said he will call a caucus this week to address the "chronic problem" of quorum.

Stricter policies on attendance

Nograles, who chairs the committee on rules, said he shared the sentiments of Quezon Rep. Erin Tañada, who complained last week that the lack of quorum prevented the lawmaker from performing their role of creating laws at a faster pace.

"The leadership will address this in caucus [this] week, together with issues on Charter change. We need to come up with stricter policies on attendance," Nograles said.

Empty session hall most times hours-a-session sight in the chamber since the last year.

There were days when only few or six lawmakers hold session—the presiding officer usually a deputy speaker), one of the assistant majority leaders, one or two of the deputy minority leaders, the sponsor of the proposed measure and the interpellator.

More than half of the 236-member chamber were usually absent, while about 50 of those [members who were present were usually seen to flee to their offices resolving guests or whiling away the time in the congressional lounge.

It was Iloilgan del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. who first called attention on the failure of the House for year to counter the inquired quorum, which is 50 percent plus one of the 236 congressmen.

Lack of waves bodies

Pichay said the lack of waves bodies in transact business session days are Mondays to Wednesday) reflected badly on the House leadership.

But the problem persisted, prompting the presiding officer and majority leader to appeal on many occasions to the House majority [to] question their absences in order to speed up the legislative mill.

The last time the chamber had enough waves bodies on the floor was on May 16 when Speaker Jose de Venecia presided over the resumption of the second regular session of the 12th Congress.

After that, the majority [with the cooperation of a liberally minority] had to resort again to the myth in parliamentary procedure that there's a quorum unless one questions it.

But with the Speaker himself complaining lately about the slow pace of Charter change, Nograles has [had to address the chronic absences.

—Michael Lim Ubac

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 29, 2006
7th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 18:1-8
Gospel: John 16:20-33

[The disciples said to Jesus, "Now you are speaking plainly and not in veiled language! Now we see that you know all things, even before any question you [because of this we believe that you came from God."

Jesus answered them, "For very truly I tell you, [you will be scattered, each to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.

"I have told you all this, so that in me you may have peace. You will have trouble in the world, but, courage! I have overcome the world."

Commentary:

This is the time of the Spirit that completes, deepens and confirms Christ and makes us godly witnesses. It is the Spirit that teaches us, guides us, remembers us and [convinces us] of sin, of righteousness and of judgment [and] that glorifies Christ.

And Jesus warns us: do you easily believe? Like the disciples, do we panic, scatter and run when something confronts us, and so become cowardly, or do we slumber among ourselves [when we] see the challenges all around us? Do we [have] a sense of urgency? The disciples have Jesus alone, and only the Church will [have the same thing to do with, or Jesus, the Word of God, that we find peace and. It is that peace that gives us the courage to overcome our [weaknesses and] [illegible].

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MILF junks provision in RP-OIC deal

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Saturday rejected one of the provisions in the six-point agreement it recently had with the Philippine government and the International Organizations of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Khaled Musa, deputy chief of the MILF information committee, said the group was surprised when the government and the OIC agreed "to converge" elements of the peace agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with the peace negotiations being conducted with the MILF.

The provision was embodied in a joint communiqué between Manila and the OIC issued on May 22 following a fact-finding mission by the latter to review the status of the 1996 peace accord between the government and the MNLF.

Musa said that while the MILF desired to work closer with the MNLF and other groups dedicated to the defense and promotion of the interests of the Bangsamoro people, they rejected the provision even if the intervention appeared to be good.

"The MILF deserves all the right to be consulted. The framework of the MNLF peace pact with the government differs radically from what the MILF is negotiating with the government," Musa said.

Musa said the MILF will work elsewhere of the issue from the OIC.

The OIC brokered the talks that led to the signing of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the government and the MNLF. The MILF was granted observer status in the OIC in 1977. The government and the MNLF finally signed a peace accord in 1996.

Also agreed upon during the recent OIC fact-finding mission was the need to review the 1996 peace agreements in a high level tripartite meeting to be set up in Jeddah as soon as possible; the reversal of efforts to scrap the peace dividend to the Bangsamoro people with the support of OIC member-states; the Islamic Development Bank and the Fund for Islamic Solidarity; the early resolution of the case against MNLF chair Nur Misuari within the framework of the Philippine judicial process; the commencement of the break through for peace and unity in Sulu brought about by the OIC; and the continuation by the government to seek observer status in the OIC. Joefrey Mednes, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Phivolcs: RP must prepare for big one

From page A1

to provide disaster council by earthquakes is to anticipate and prepare for them."

He said the "good news" was that government agencies had been actively involved in earthquake preparedness.

He said the Department of Public Works and Highways had been inspecting public facilities.

The Department of Education and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority have joined the National Disaster Coordinating Council in advocating quake preparedness in both public and private schools, homes and offices.

"As the Makati business district, building administrators have come up with emergency evacuation plans. We're currently finalizing its action plan for the whole country," Solidum said.

The sobering news

Still, the geographical reality can be pretty sobering.

A Phivolcs report furnished the inquirer said that the existence of seismogenic "earthquake generators" and the recorded strong earthquakes that had hit the Philippines "should readily convince us that the country is indeed seismically active."

"We should also accept the fact that strong earthquakes with magnitudes 7 or more had affected us in the recent past... the likelihood of these destructive earthquakes occurring again in the future is indeed very strong," the report said.

Solidum said the West Valley fault or WVF—formerly known as the Marikina fault, one of the country's active faults—generated a magnitude 7-plus or major earthquake when it last moved about 300 years ago.

"We can't say when exactly it would move again. But considering its long repose period, the probability of it moving again soon is increasing and increasing," he said.

5-10 quakes a day

Movements along these faults and in areas of trenches, in addition to the two seismically unobservable tectonic plates where the Philippine archipelago sits, generate between five and 10 earthquakes a day.

The WVF, latest part of the so-called Valley Fault System, or VFS, beyond 1 km east of the center of Metro Manila.

It runs from Montalban, Rizal, in the north, passes through the eastern portion of Metro Manila, or west of Laguna de Bay, and extends southward, possibly as far as the Tagaytay ridge.

On the other hand, the East Valley Fault extends from Montalban south to the Pasig City area.

Danger zones

In a briefing paper, Phivolcs said that "based on radiocarbon dates and soil development, scientists ... have determined at least three rupturing events within the last 1,400 years along the VFS. The last earthquake that ruptured the system probably occurred during the 16th or 17th century."

In its April edition, National Geographic magazine featured the Philippines as one of the earthquake "danger zones" worldwide. It also tagged the country as an earthquake "high risk" zone.

In the National Geographic mag, nine high risk areas—which include Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Pakistan, parts of China, India and Bangladesh—were marked bright orange.

Asked how he would rate the Philippines in terms of preparedness on a scale of one to 10, Solidum said, "It's hard to say. We don't have the right instruments. We're just starting a program of monitoring these earthquakes along with other countries around the world."

He said that compared to Indonesia, the Philippines had a more sound building code.

"In Indonesia, reports said those destroyed by the quakes were buildings made of bricks, wood or basically old materials. Ours are certainly different thing," he said.

RP better equipped

Solidum said the Philippines was "way ahead of our neighbors in terms of equipment."

From only 25 quake recording stations ten years ago, Phivolcs currently operates a nationwide network of 64 seismic stations, put up with financial and technical aid from Japan.

Only 35 of the stations are manned.

Solidum claimed the government's preparedness level the past couple of years was "definitely better than before."

"We have more stations. We also have guidelines on how to go about seismic hazards and other quake related issues," he said.

According to Phivolcs, "the most seismically active" part of the country is in eastern section, with an average of 18 quakes a year.

"The other relatively active parts are found in the eastern side of northern Luzon and the islands of Leyte, Samar and Mindoro. The presence of the East Luzon Trench, Cotabato Fault and the northern segment of the Philippine Fault Zone make the areas near Dingalan Bay (in Aurora) and Cotabato (found in Quezon) earthquake-prone," it said.

Patient and impulsive

In its cover story titled "Quake: The Next Big One," the National Geographic listed a "fundamental problem" with earthquakes.

"They're both capricious and limited-channel duos. They're on their own peculiar schedule. Earthquake faults have a scary way of remaining persistent with unpredictableness," it said.

Today, some of the simplest questions about earthquakes remain hard to answer, said the publication.

"Why do they start? What makes them stop? Why do some small quakes grow into bigger quakes, while others stay small?"

"And there's the broader question. Are there clear patterns, rules and regularities in earthquakes, or are they inherently random and chaotic?"

Predicting earthquakes

History has shown the frightening power of earthquakes.

The Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami that wiped out more than 200,000 lives in several Asian countries was caused by a massive quake. A magnitude-7.6 quake centered in Kashmir last October killed 73,000 people.

The 15 magazine said earthquake prediction "remains a matter of myth, of Hindenburgs in which birds and snakes and fish and bunny rabbits somehow sniff out the coming calamity."

"What scientists can do right now is make good maps of fault zones and figure out which ones are probably due for ruptures. And they can make forecasts. Turning forecasts into predictions may be impossible, but scientists are doing everything they can to solve the mysteries of earthquakes."

Quakes follow pattern

That's "very true," according to Solidum. Like their foreign counterparts, Phivolcs scientists also make maps of rocks and other things to see where the ground had shaken in the past, and how hard.

"In Japan, government scientists say they have settled the question [on the predictability of earthquakes]," the National Geographic said. "Earthquakes are not random. They follow a pattern. They have detectable precursors. The government knows where Japan's big ones will come: likely on-time. This is a country where the trains run on time and earthquakes are supposed to do the same."

Prepare in advance

Here, earthquake prediction is "still a problem for us," Solidum admitted.

He said that after the 1990 quake, Phivolcs conducted an individual study on what might happen to Metro Manila in terms of the impact of the different hazards posed by earthquakes, "like ground shaking, ground rupture and liquefaction."

Phivolcs followed that up in 2002 with a study of more detailed estimates of earthquake impacts and a master plan on reducing such impacts.

The agency is currently developing a seismic sensor with funding from Finland.

"Technologically, we can't beat the arrival of a tremor but it's important that we achieve a community-based warning system," Solidum said.

He said, "We cannot predict when an earthquake will actually take place, but we know where that earthquake will be generated by mapping the country's quake generators. We know they will act in more or less the same way. The best thing to do is to prepare in advance."

With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

5.3 quake in Babuyan

AN EARTHQUAKE REGISTERING 5.3 on the Richter scale jolted the northern Philippines at 9 p.m. on Sunday with reports of damage or injuries, an official said.

The epicenter was located about 220 km northeast of Laoag in Ilocos Norte.

"The quake happened near the sparsely inhabited Babuyan Islands," said Robert Tiglao of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology. "Earthquakes of this size are considered quite normal here in the Philippines."

On Saturday, a quake hit the Indonesian island of Java, killing about 5,000 people. AFP

Some of the destructive earthquakes the country has experienced

Year	Epicenter	Intensity	Surface magnitude	Death toll/Missing
Nov 11, 1934	North of Masbate	VII	7.1	19/40
Jul 16, 1990	Baguio City	VIII	7.8	1,283/1,190
Aug 17, 1976	Moro Gulf	VII	7.9	2,168/5,000
Mar 17, 1973	Ragay Gulf	VII	7.0	14/no info
Apr 01, 1955	Davao, Davao	VII	7.2	11/20
Aug 02, 1968	Casiguran	VII	7.5	270/261
Apr 01, 1981	Luzon del Sur	VII	7.6	200/11
Jul 27, 1924	Batangas	VII	6.5	11/21

IN THE KNOW

Tracing faults

FAULTS ARE BREAKS OR ZONES OF weakness in rocks along which displacements occur, causing earthquakes. They may extend for kilometers across the earth's surface or tens of kilometers underneath.

Earthquake generators are plate interactions, displacements along the Philippine fault zone and movements along other active faults.

The other active faults in the Philippines are: Digdig in Aurora, Lupao, which runs from Nueva Ecija to Pangasinan; San Manuel in Pangasinan; Aglubang River in Abra; Tablac-off Pamay and Bacnotan in Ilocos; and Castigumas, which runs parallel to the East Luzon Trough and Mindanao.

The country's other earthquake generators include the Philippine Trench, East Luzon Trough, Manila Trench, Negros Trench, Cotabato Trench, Sulu Trench, Davao Trench, and the collision of zones between Palawan and Mindoro, the Zamboanga Peninsula and Western Mindanao.

65 Pinoys bring home tales of terror

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Continued from A1

Mainitpo, who worked as a welder in East Timor for three years, was in the first batch of Filipino evacuees to flee the Timorese capital of Dili.

The evacuees included two young girls and an infant.

First to disembark from a Philippine Air Force C-130 at Villamor Air Base was Rosalie Mainitpo, who carried her month-old daughter, Rowena, in her arms.

Years flew

Mainitpo's tears flowed as she was met by President Macapagal-Arroyo, who welcomed the evacuees home.

Ms Arroyo paid particular attention to the mother and child, urging Mainitpo to take her family to chair she could breast-feed Rowena.

In Dili itself, hundreds of UN employees were evacuated as rival gangs roamed the streets of the capital, torching homes and battling with members in defiance of foreign peacekeepers sent to quell the violence that has plagued the fledgling country into chaos.

Tens of thousands of residents also fled Dili as sporadic refuge in churches, embassies and in the airport, leaving much of the city deserted.

Smoke billowed from several areas where attacks were taking place. Australian troops patrolled around the airport of gunfire in tanks and armored personnel carriers, but seemed to study briefly scatter confidence, according to The Associated Press.

Evacuees, members of six, worked part-time in Dili, doing different jobs for four years. But many families also a Filipino, stayed behind.

"I won't be going back there," said Alvarado, a native of Ponte, Pampanga.

Many of the evacuees described the situation in Dili as nothing short of terrifying. They stayed inside their homes, not daring to go out lest they get caught in the crossfire.

Burning houses

"In our street, I saw people chasing each other with machetes. Three houses were burned down and four people perished in one," Adelyn Pascual, who said she worked in Dili's Ministry for Planning and Finance, told dzF Television Seoul.

At night, Pascual said she saw smoke and burning buildings, then she would say bodies are carried away, gutted buildings in the morning. She said while foreigners were not targeted, they could still be hurt in the clashes.

"You can't really avoid bullets because bullets couldn't distinguish from foreigners," she said.

"We couldn't do anything but to leave because we got hurt in the chaos. Something bad would happen to us," said Manuel Cruz, an evacuee in Dili.

There are about 200 Filipinos working in East Timor as engineers, nongovernment organization volunteers and Catholic missionaries.

A Filipino couple said that they had no lot on the floor inside their DE apartment to avoid being hit by stray bullets.

The husband, who requested anonymity, said his former coworker was hit in the neck by a wayward bullet while peeking through his apartment window.

"That's how dangerous the situation there is," he said. "That's why when we were informed that the Philippine government would be sending a C-130 to have us evacuated, we immediately took it."

Text messages helped

He said the Filipinos were immediately informed by the Philippine Embassy of the evacuation plan through an efficient text network.

"They took her there," he said of the embassy staff led by Ambassador Pedro Agulto dos Dong.

He said he had been there only a week for a visit when the violence erupted. He had been working in Dili for the last five years as a consultant to the country's Department of Education.

Ian Clemens, a 28-year-old engineer, said that even if the foreigners were not the direct targets in the strife, he chose not to stay outside his house.

"Our instinct at first was instinct because you really don't know what will happen next. The situation was very unstable because there would be violence one day, things would calm down the next, then you'd hear rumors of attacks again," Clemens said.

Clemens had been working in Dili for a Japanese company for a year and a half.

Some 110 other Filipinos, including those working with the United Nations, had chosen to stay behind, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Among them was Reynaldo Flores, a Baguio native doing missionary work in Soonsorons, outside Dili.

"He decided to stay behind because he could not leave the many people we had taught," his wife, Jeanette, said.

Jeanette, 34, said she and her husband de-

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OPINION

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Goodbye, dear nurses

EDITORIAL

THE US SENATE HAS JUST PASSED AN IMMIGRATION bill that, among other provisions, lifts the limit on the number of foreign nurses who can immigrate to the United States. To be sure, the bill faces strong opposition from the US House of Representatives, and the provision lifting the cap on the number of special visas for nurses is not even on the conference House bill.

It looks unlikely that the provision, as phrased, will make it into law. But the possibility of the flow of US-bound Filipino nurses turning into a flood does exist, if not now, then when the nursing shortage in the United States becomes especially acute. Are we ready for it?

According to The New York Times, the shortfall of registered nurses in the United States reached 118,000 last April. In 2002, the US government estimated that the shortfall will hit 800,000 by 2020. It must have been numbers to dire as these that prompted Sen. Sara Jane Fortuno back to sponsor the proposal. Last week, he said the senate he did not expect the provision to drain Africa countries of their nurses, but he admitted that the impact on the nursing professions in the Philippines and India could be considerable.

The Philippines already sends several thousand nurses to the United States every year; in fact—though you wouldn't know it from watching the clamored emergency rooms in the medical dramas of American TV—it is the United States' biggest source of foreign nurses. A registered nurse can expect to earn some $36,000 a year in the United States (about P1.9 million), Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan told The New York Times. In contrast, a nurse can expect to earn $2,808 in the Philippines (about P156,000, or less than P9,000 a month). Given these numbers, an open-door policy for foreign nurses can only bring more applicants to America's doorstep.

But if the Philippine health care system is already under heavy strain because several thousand nurses leave for abroad every year, that same open-door policy may actually force the system's collapse. "The Filipino people will suffer because the US will get all our trained nurses," George Cardoso, president of the Philippine Nursing Association, told The New York Times. "But what can we do?"

What can we do, indeed? The British, who have shown the way in condoning developing-economy debt, are pushing the envelope in the nursing issue too. They have allowed about 3300 students to "temporarily" defer their tenures of foreign nurses, in Africa. The nurses can go to develop more nurses, perhaps to meet national needs, or at least to make sure that the goose that lays the golden egg stays reasonably healthy.

The US Senate immigration bill carries no provision on temperature. It seems to be based on a classic economic assumption: let the market decide. If the United States offers both opportunity and income, other countries will simply have to join and lose it. We say "seems" because the economics behind the provision is actually highly selective.

While the American Hospital Association welcomes the possibility of more foreign nurses, the American Nurses Association opposes it. Granted, a large part of the opposition is based on simple fear; many foreign nurses will mean fewer American jobs. But American nurses also oppose the provision because it is a short-term and simple-minded solution to the health care problem.

"We're disappointed that Congress, instead of passing appropriations for domestic nursing assistance, is outsourcing the education of nurses," Rita Hefleben, the nursing group's associate director of government affairs, told The New York Times. According to the National League for Nursing, some 155,000 qualified Americans who applied for nursing school were turned down in 2005. Why? Not enough schools, not enough slots.

Instead of the 20s economy repairing the problem by investing money in new nursing schools and more nursing teachers, with higher pay (teachers earn less than the nursing students they turn out), the US government settles for the easy answer—and consequences to the developing world be damned.

We are loathe to see travel restrictions imposed on Filipinos of high ability and solid ambition. But when our hospitals can no longer function because most of our nurses are in the United States, such drastic measures may be necessary. It is in our best interests that we both prepare for that eventuality and prevent it from coming to pass.

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More mysteries in botched Masinloc sale

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

IN A PREVIOUS COLUMN (PDI, 5/19/06) I narrated how the greed and ambition of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) are making the National Power Corp's assets, which are being privatized, easy prey to shysters.

On Dec. 1, 2004, PSALM bid out the 600-megawatt oil-thermal coal-powered plant (NPC Pagbilao Corporation) with the bid at P882 million. To close the deal, the winning bidder must pay up-front 40 percent of the bid price (P352 million of the P882 million), plus a performance bond of $11.2 million. In case the bidder does not come up with the down payment, PSALM can confiscate the bond.

When the deadline for the payment came (Dec. 2, 2005), SMC could not fork out the needed cash; its unpaid Australian partner could not be found. PSALM could have confiscated the $11.2-million performance bond. But for some strange reason, PSALM extended the deadline for three months—to March 31, 2006, although, under the bid documents, or under the law, there was no basis for the grant of the extension.

The new deadline, March 31, 2006, came and went but still there was no payment from SMC. For a second time, PSALM could have seized the bond. But again, PSALM gave SMC another 90-day extension, or until the end of June 2006. SMC also offered to increase the value of the performance bond by $1 million, to $14.2 million, as penalty for the delay in the payment of the $352 million. A new partner, Hanbil Berhad of Malaysia, was reported to have assumed the obligation to pay both the $352 million down payment and the $14.2-million bond; although, again, Hanbil's takeover from SMC's original Australian partner was not confirmed. Or PSALM's bidding rules. Not only that, Hanbil slipped in as additional condition for the effectivity of the $14.2-million bond: that Masinloc be first awarded the Malampaya contract until 2040.

Maybe this is nothing to do with it, and maybe public confusion was not part of the conditions of the bidding. If it were, PSALM would have increased income and better luck. The government cannot force Meralco to sign a supply contract with Masinloc. Considering the high price, this would result in very high power rates for consumers. Randall is trying to change the condition of the bid to a cash-and-carried bidding.

PSALM had until last weekend to accept or reject Randall's amended proposal, as if it had a choice. The Asset Purchase Agreement (APA) for Masinloc provides that the performance bond cannot, under any circumstance, be made subject to any condition. PSALM's only logical course of action was to reject the proposal, confiscate the original $11.2-million bond, and hold another public bidding.

PSALM's strange behavior is unveiling the availability of the government's privatization process. Who is PSALM blocking?

To find out, let's take a closer look at the people and circumstances behind this botched deal. SMC's local shareholder Jose's cell line "tht. it's happens to be a distributor of wires and cables sold to power utilities like Meralco. It's SMC's bidding that was supposed to be the 60-percent owner of Masinloc Mobile Power Corp., a small 130-MW barge-mounted independent power producer (IPP) in Masinloc, telling power in Meralco. His partner in Dumyats is First Gen Power Resources Corp., owned in turn by the Lopezes and Hi Pon Kong. It is the same the partnership was signed in 1993, the president and part-owner of First Gen is Philippine operations was some richer than "Mr. B" who is now a ranking official of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

The partnership of Mr. A and Mr. B was the first connected when they brought into the picture another 130-MW barge. The three companies were called the East Asia United Power Corp. Five owners required by Sec. Jose Rene Fuertes to be known showed Mr. B operating in per Mr. A's connections coming up to about 15-21 cents per kWh, or as high as P150-P200 million per year, and a secrets fee of $112 million for securing contracts to the additional capacity.

The relationship between Mr. A and Mr. B is still alive and well, and it manifested itself during the blackout.

When it gets even darker is how Mr. B appears to be helping his friend from his position in the ERC. The fact that this happened was because Meralco applied for and was granted by the ERC a 20-percent increase in rates since. This effectively gave Meralco an additional P10 million in revenues per month.

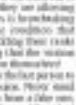
More recent indications seemed to have been confirmed by the ERC's decision to impose a cap in contract with PSB. Last Dec. 22, 2004, the ERC issued guidelines titled "Interim Interim Guidelines for the Recovery of Costs for the Generation Component of the Distribution Utilities Rates." The title sounds like a mouthful, but for a standard it is just the effect of requiring distribution utilities, like Meralco, to contract for that they have contracted public bidding in the procurement of new power supply contracts with generation companies.

This was seen as a move to protect consumers. Immediately thereafter, several utilities (including unregulated ones) submitted their supply contracts requirements for power supply.

But less weeks ago, on May 15, 2006, the ERC again backed to the power industry by issuing Resolution No. 21. All bright days had been so consistent, the ERC suspended transparent public bidding by requiring only their power supplies. The resolution said rate hike increase. The guidelines were temporarily being shelved because they began to hold public hearings on them. In the first moment to conveniently open a window for Mr. A and PSB to sign a smorgasbord deal with Masinloc. Only three days of the five consultations required by Resolution No. 21.

'Hao-siao'

There's the Rub



Gonzalo de Quiros

RAUL GONZALEZ SAYS MOST TIME HON. minister is amenable to allowing media practitioners to carry guns to solve the problem of their becoming an endangered species. But first, he says, media should get rid of its "hao siao" journalists or the journos and newsmen let wear long-sleeved shirts.

Just by that, president of the Association of Responsible Media, is stated by this. The Palace spokesperson, he says, is "more sad, come." "Finally there have come to their senses and have decided on safe ways to give us a fighting chance when confronted with a violent situation." He agrees that "media is also responsible to police our ranks and get rid of the bad eggs or irresponsible journalists."

What thoroughly idiotic things to say. How are not all media people "irresponsible"?

To begin with, if anti-kidnapping efforts in the nation is their current destination, why not anti-terrorism, too? It's not just the journalists that are being slaughtered like chickens for the roasting; so are soldiers and police. It's the whole nation. Indeed, more the nationals than the journalists, the number of civilians now having reached a mind-boggling 200 mas-o-cho. Why not allow them to carry rifles as well? Or since they're fairer game than the others, lawmakers and other high-powered weapons to defend themselves from the murderers?

Indeed, why not arm the ordinary citizens who are victims also of murder and cranky machetes? Why not arm the hotel vendors who are victims of holdups, and fast-food restaurant workers who work at night and raped by thugs, and who may not report the crimes to cops for fear of being robbed or raped more? What is the impediment here, that only privileged classes are to be allowed to defend themselves from murderers and muggers?

But more than this, reform does present, even if it takes the line of the bragged Gonzalez, get off reading this column? Sen. Enrile is responsible for many killings, by commission and omission, by active support, by opinion and encouragement, by condoning irresponsibility and command, responsibility. The Commission on Human Rights and Amnesty International are right about that. The head of that government should be feeling deeply guilty and ashamed of himself, and her justice secretary should be feeling like an absolute failure, if not an irredeemable fool. For there is now no fear, and of the goodness of time beasts, they are allowing journalists to arm themselves to break-bearing murderers. And that on the conditions that journalists first behave by nothing their code of conformance, broadly binding that the victims who brought the murderers upon themselves!

At the very least, Gonzalez is the last person to be talking about fake and perjury. Never mind that he counted tell real justice from a false one, mind only that he cannot tell a real President from a fake one. Never mind that he cannot tell legitimate governance from a fake one, mind only that he cannot tell a legitimate government from an illegitimate one. In all media he is a reverse the last one journalists to say right. But first, let us reserve a fine one: President—and his lawyer—Glenda Arroyo one guess.

While at this, it should be the easiest thing in the world to reserve the hao-siao journalists in this country. Gonzalez himself knows who they are. They are the gunmen, mercenaries and quacks in the administration's payroll.

I can never tell myself to believe the argument about rules arming journalists is the most stupid thing in the world. On the part of the journalists, arming themselves is the very least antidote. You are in your toilets, all you'll succeed in doing is to make yourself scared—and then they've been shot on the back. At the very most, you use your toilets, you make them resistance to society. As it is, this country is already cursed with abusive journalists who have you, your families and, and not all of them will fall into Gonzalez's category of hao-siao since they are regarded as legitimate journalists by acts of legitimate governments and by corrupt, cheating legitimate media organizations. Are make them guns available to them? Are you going to have a lot of IEDs, Jolibee and Pizza Hut delivery boys having the privilege with their bodies.

But more than that, you just journalists—and you're not the kind-breaking crime of journalists being slaughtered wholesale in our midst the even more mind-boggling crime of having that government from blame.

It's not just that this government is guilty of dereliction of duty. Through that is a mind-boggling crime by itself, but government that has a record of journalists—and activists—being murdered cycle-wide has forfeited its right to carry guns. If it were so elected one, and this one and no. It steals all pretensions to democratic rule completely. The protection of the right to free speech includes keeping the speakers alive. There's no democracy when the other says, "We all mean well, but hahahaha we have to kill you completely literally, you live to your sorrowful."

But more than dereliction of duty, the government is directly, immediately and implacably guilty of the slaughter of the journalists. You do not deny murders of this order. You do not just tolerate it, you encourage it. You keep harassing media, accusing the industry's practitioners of indecent and threatening them with all sorts of reprisal, but do not just encourage it, you support it. You keep complaining loudly to your thugs about journalists the way Binay (I complained loudly to his lieutenants about Thomas Jefferson saying, "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" you do not just suppress it, you forward it.

In the Arroyo regime, the only things left that are real are corpses. Everything else is fantasy.

My Charter change credo

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

IN THE ONGOING DEBATE ABOUT CHARTER change, there are two issues which may be blocking the rational discussion of each. These are (1) the legality of the procedures, and (2) the wisdom of the changes being proposed.

I believe that before we can effectively discuss the wisdom of the changes being proposed, we should first settle the issue of the legality of the procedures being followed. Otherwise, even well-meant, correct advocacies of Charter change will continue to face inhospitable reception.

Most legality issues are very preposterous which I believe are unreasonable and which are so impossible for much of the indisputable reception of the proposed changes.

First, there can be no Charter change without the participation of the Senate. We can debate about the manner or extent of Senate participation, but the Senate cannot be excluded altogether. This is the reason why the Supreme Court has said so, through Santiago v. Guingona, in 1997.

Now the debatable point.

First, the Senate's participation. "There are two ways in which the power of the Senate to ratify and to initiate may be exercised. One (which I prefer) I would call active, and the other passive. Active participation means that three-fourths of the Senate should vote in favor of any proposed change. But a reasonable approach would say that if at least a majority of the Senate should vote in favor, the revised Senate participation would be justified; however, if against, voting is required—and I maintain it is—the initiative approach would not satisfy the three-fourths language of the Constitution.

Under the latter's enforcement, we can debate on whether the changes sponsored by figure eg

Bayan constitute mere amendments or a revision. But the fact is: there is an enabling law for either amendment or revision. The decision of the Court on this issue became final in 1997 and the Court can no longer base jurisdiction to entertain this decision today. A new law must be passed.

We can kill ourselves with the limited power we possess: that the individual sections being proposed by figure, taken by themselves, are mere amendments, but it would make no difference. There is no enabling law. Period. I cannot even have it out in any manner.

Now let us talk about joint session or no joint session. Under the 1935 Constitution, the vote was one vote: Congress had to be in joint session for that purpose, requiring senators and congressmen to be able to propose amendments, the two houses had to be in joint session. In other words, Congress does not a constituent assembly, that is, an assembly empowered to propose amendments, unless it is in joint session. The text was clear: "Congress in joint session assembled ..."

The present Constitution does not say anything about a joint session. It simply says that Congress may propose amendments. That means that even now, without a joint session, Congress is already a constituent assembly empowered to propose amendments. The only question is how.

Since the two houses meet together in joint session for purposes of discussing Charter change? There is no prohibition against this. Does the bicameral character of Congress prohibit joint discussion? I cannot see any problem operation. Does the bicameral character of Congress prohibit bicameral conference committees? It does not because the decision of the bicameral committee has to be confirmed by each house. So, too, for at least the 1986 Constitutional Commission. What is different is the bicameral nature of Congress.

But if in joint session, why may they not vote jointly? The reason is that Congress is a bicameral body and was made such also on matters debated in the 1986 Constitutional Commission. What bother separating the two: if they can act jointly on one, don't they?

Since there is no provision commanding the two houses to come together, how does any may to propose changes? Since 1987, I have been discussing this proposition that they can propose amendments and revision when they are in they are. Once a Charter change is approved by a three-fourths vote of one house, it can be introduced in the other house for similar action. Then it goes to the bicameral body.

Assuming, I would not give this process the misleading name of legislative process because it is not legislation subject to the rules of the legislative process. I would call it a constituent process, a process not general in, and both houses would be subject to similar rules as the Constitutional Convention. The Constitution leaves the drawing of procedural rules to a Constitutional Convention. So, too, it does for Congress as a constituent assembly presided over by the rules do not transform the decision-making process of Congress as a constituent assembly.

I realize that things would have been much simpler if the 1986 Constitutional Commission had simply copied the provision of the 1935 Constitution. But, we've here it, the Commission failed to do so. We are thus faced with a provision on Charter change which challenges our skills in constitutional construction. Indeed, it was an oversight. Maybe a joke. But we can also look at it, if you wish, as the 1986 Constitutional Commission's act of faith in the unerring skills of those who would be charged with implementing the Constitution.

Decoded by SM

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

MUCH ADO OVER NOTHING. THIS IS WHAT many have come to conclude in their judgment of the movie version of "The Da Vinci Code."

But last week, a reader's letter in my mailbox said something about the decision of SM not to show the movie in its malls, wherever they may be located in the country. The 500 Cinema complex plus 40 percent of the movie cinemas in the country.

SM, as a policy, does not show R-18 movies, or those commonly listed "for adults only" in its malls. The reason for this, SM explained, is that SM malls are meant to serve as the family. When the SM management announced this policy a few years ago, it was met with praise by family advocates.

That's one reason, it is the only business enterprise—a major one at that—to ignore the lure of huge earnings dangled by a lurid publicized movie that promises to be a box office hit.

But there is something profound behind SM's decision to turn the movie. Reportedly, the director of the movie is a member of Opus Dei, a member of the Board of Governors of the 5th floor of the SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. The management sees the paradox of adoring Christ while misrepresenting him or something that was simply unbelievable.

If you look very closely, there is something here that SM has put on as an example for other small business establishments to emulate, especially those involved in visual entertainment, including television networks and cable television companies.

Catholic American lay deacon Herb I. Bruce, who is based in Manila, discusses the wisdom behind the SM decision, which is largely attributed to Mr. Hty Sy, wife of tycoon Henry Sy. Here are excerpts from Bruce's letter:

"While the reason of Mr. Sy is remarkable in an age where most businessmen, Catholic or otherwise, think about profitability and not about apparent earnings, when I find more inspiring is the reasoning upon which his stance is based. His reasoning is so lucid that even the most extra-ordinary Catholic bigot must concede the point, namely that the salvation of souls and conversion of souls, together with indifference thereto, stand in mutual opposition ...

"Mr. Sy's admirably clear reasoning reaffirmed my prior suspicion that the Da Vinci Deception is in fact opposition, with which "a," even if (perhaps?) not with a big "N." To us, as practicing Catholics, properly speaking, it is revelation that the light of Christ and the darkness of evil stand in opposition thus there is absolutely nothing in common between them. By demarcating the two positions as contradictory and leaving no room for ambiguity, an apocalyptic vision people in order to stand on one or the other side. The reasoning of Mr. Sy is instructive as it reveals that these two positions are precisely characterized by attention on the one side and distraction or indifference on the other.

"Those who are demanding democracy for a cartoon call for Christians everywhere to wake up and stand by the coffee!

"Anyone involved in making or promoting the Da Vinci Desecration, whether they mean to believe it or not, has spun directly on the Divine Face of Christ in

Dozens of cinemas and bookstores who consider themselves Christians and have yet profited from the book or film have committed the sin of Judas. While we might hopefully correct them people where possible, it is imperative that we make reparation for the sins of Christ for these managers.

"Many who consider themselves Christians apparently find the film entertaining even while, presumably, not believing its deceptions. A simple hypothetical question gives the lie to this pseudo position. Might one reasonably find entertainment value in a movie that depicts a child molester as a prominent, wondrous, fair and kind? The point is as compelling as it is crass! If you can read this book or watch this film without being outraged, you simply do not love Jesus! Even though you did not write it, direct it, or produce it, who made, promoted and profited from the film, he will ask you one of his reasons for being lukewarm! While we might potentially convert those people, according to a divine imperative (as we have been doing in Manila and in these articles) places for some other now. Finally he tells:

"It has been well said that evil triumphs only when good men and women fail in their duty to stand up for the good! This article is not intended to give you warm fuzzy feelings but to invite you to action! The action I propose to provide and protect."

In such 300 to tell us that the truth cannot be "relativized."

* * *

Comments: cmontalvan@ateneo.edu

Futile flags

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

ON OCT. 14, 1943, IN FRONT OF THE LEGISLATIVE Building, Jose P. Laurel was inaugurated president of the Japanese-sponsored Republic of the Philippines. The ceremony was, in many respects, identical to the ceremonies inaugurating the Commonwealth of the Philippines some eight years earlier.

Like his predecessor, Laurel swore a treasury in Filipino—not foreign—to give good the invocation. And, according to one eyewitness, the second contained the exact number of common sense that formed after President Laurel took his oath of office—to a smile, saluting the ceremonies were the American dictators as gone only 19 gone in 1935. This time, Laurel was honored with a 21-gun salute.

And this time, the Philippine flag was hoisted to fly alone, as befitted a sovereign nation, which was what the Japanese said the Philippines had become.

An eyewitness, historian H. Abdilla, a student at San Juan de Letran, later described the event in his memoirs. Among other things, he wrote:

"Before five minutes before we o'clock this, Emilio Aguinaldo and Jose P. Laurel, the President, both of my father's Revolutionary Government of 1898, hoisted the Philippine Flag to the huge staff, in the state of our national anthem, both hitherto banned. Then the applause was deafening. For my part, I think neither that I was unable to restrain some tears from rolling down to my cheeks. They were, indeed, the expression of the conflicting emotions that assailed me: on the one hand, the irrepressible satisfaction upon seeing our national flag flutter alone, as long last, and, on the other hand, the fear of the chance that we might be making the Philippines to such sickening fascistic subdivision. I was somewhat comforted, however, upon recalling that, allegedly upon the suggestion of the Filipino leader, Manuel Roxas, the latter flew of our flag—"the good, the patriotic and the beautiful"—with the sun and the three stars, adjacent by a pale sky blue until the the proportion of the triangle diminishing in relation to the size of the flag had been altered. That was the subliminal message of our pioneer, who told the Japanese in no uncertain terms that the Philippines was to be free and independent.

Now, it is just another flag, why may they not vote jointly? The reason is that Congress is a bicameral body and was made such also on matters debated in the 1986 Constitutional Commission. What bother separating the two: if they can act jointly on one, don't they?

Since there is no provision commanding the two houses to come together, how does any may to propose changes? Since 1987, I have been discussing this proposition that they can propose amendments and revision when they are in they are. Once a Charter change is approved by a three-fourths vote of one house, it can be introduced in the other house for similar action. Then it goes to the bicameral body.

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Volcanic changes

REVOLUTION. THIS WAS HOW I FELT WHEN I SAW THE Mayon Volcano. Majestic and breathing from every angle, Mayon is a distinguishing landmark in the province of Albay. The scenery is also known as a beautiful green of life and a perfect and mind-stirring masterpiece of God.

This remarkable welcome served as the inspiring backdrop for the Mentoring Excellence seminar-workshop held in the town of Camalig from April 19-27, 2006. The seminar-workshop had 30 participants, including highly esteemed principals and managers from all over Luzon. As one of the facilitators, I expected to pass how the participants assimilated workshops of their beloved volcano since their lives.

COMMENTARY

Katie Villarosa

During those four days, these Bicolanos raved with passion and captivated with determination to champion a cause and work for a change in our country through another kind of revolution—the Education Revolution.

From the start of the seminar, the participants gradually realized the need for a change in their attitude toward the challenges of their work and the importance of their positions in society transformation. They shared earnestly his capabilities and limitations as encouraged by inspiring and positive.

However, "Kinetic as passion" from an "Aha!" to an "Aha" mentality became the dream of these educators. Eventually, initiative, cooperation and responsibility were voluntarily offered as the new "means" with which to handle the promising blocks they've faced or might yet encounter in the future.

On the second day, issues concerning their main clientele—the children—took center stage. The participants acknowledged their crucial role in the task of shaping the character of the youth. Through various activities, such as sharing personal experiences as an educator and watching the movie, "Emperor's Club," the participants were reminded to respect the giftedness and uniqueness of every individual.

More significantly, they were encouraged to "walk their talk" in trying to become values-driven leaders for young learners responsible citizens. I personally handled that part of the seminar, and it was very inspiring to see the participants respond and express their renewed zeal for the teaching profession and their new sense of hope for the country.

By the third and fourth day, the participants, like the active Bicolanos they are, were ready to roll up their sleeves and work. Laughter and songs erupted each new presentation, showed how they had come to feel at ease with each other. A sense of camaraderie was evident as they felt united in the knowledge that they shared the same purpose.

The modules on "Leadership for Service," "The Art of Learning," "Managing Effective Meetings," "Teaching and Learning Strategies" further reinforced their sense of mission and inspired them to take on a more skilled role as mentors and makers of the new kind of revolution. By the end of the seminar-workshop, the participants were bursting with enthusiasm almost forty action plans even as they declared their commitment to bring about changes in their spheres of influence.

As a volunteer facilitator of the Mentoring Excellence program, my experience in Albay deepened even more my commitment to the cause of Education Revolution.

In these trying times, when yet Filipinos are desperately searching for heroes willing and ready to sincerely and bravely stand up for our country, I was fortunate enough to meet Bicolano principals and master teachers who possessed the humility and willingness to revise the mental change in themselves first before attempting to change others. They exemplified heroism—the courage to fight for our country, the Philippines—not through promises, lifting or impeachments, but by the simple pursuit of their mission to educate and give hope to the heart, through role modeling.

The seminar-workshop ended on a positive note from history as Legaz said, the most noble activity of man. While a step take time to see the effects of Education Revolution in Albay, there are now 30 Bicolanos who have committed to the cause and who are willing to work tirelessly to make a difference in the province. I am confident we will soon be witnesses to the fruits of their labor, which will explode and create lasting changes not just in Albay but in the entire nation.

(You may send your comments to the author at mentor@kapp.org.)

* * *

Katie Villarosa is a volunteer facilitator for the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's Mentoring the Mentors Program. She is a high school history teacher at Assumption College San Lorenzo.

IN THE NEWS

Eduardo Ermita

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LETTERS

WE IS THE CONFEDERATION OF Independent Unions in the Public Sector (CIU), an umbrella organization of 170 workers' associations of national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, local government units and state universities and colleges, express our grave concerns over the decision/intervention's apparent bullying of the Career Executive Service Board.

We view this "unsolicited" — at the May 11 editorial of the inquirer just is — as tantamount to an unwarranted intervention in the deliberations of the CESB Board, which is tasked to select and appoint "worthy" career executive officials.

We believe that the CESB Board is composed of competent and honorable men and women who are more than capable of discharging their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the law and the dictates of their conscience.

We are also disturbed by the inquirer's insinuation that the CESB Board is not independent from the executive department. We wish to remind the inquirer that the CESB Board is composed of representatives from the academe, the private sector and the government, and that the chairman of the CESB Board is the chairman of the Civil Service Commission, who is a constitutional officer.

We also wish to remind the inquirer that the CESB Board is not the only body that is tasked to select and appoint career executive officials. The Career Executive Service Boards in the various departments, bureaus and agencies are also tasked to perform the same function.

We believe that the inquirer's editorial is unfair to the CESB Board and to the career executive officials who have been appointed to the CES ranks. We also believe that the inquirer's editorial is unfair to the career executive officials who have been appointed to the CES ranks. We also believe that the inquirer's editorial is unfair to the career executive officials who have been appointed to the CES ranks.

Across the NATION

'This is not the way of democracy'

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CALAMBA CITY—THE FAMILY of slain Bayan Muna leader Noel "Ninoy" Capulong yesterday challenged President Macapagal-Arroyo to show her authority and control as commander-in-chief of the police and the military by bringing to justice the killers of their loved one.

Lawyer Emilio Capulong, elder brother of the victim, said the President should once and for all prove that she has control over the armed units of the government by putting a stop to the killings of activists who, he said, wanted nothing but to help the poor Filipinos.

"This is very tragic. I grieve not only for my brother but also for the tragic situation in the country," Emilio told the reporters at the wake of his brother in Hospicio Subdivision in the upper Poblacion Uno here.

"This is not the way of democracy. What is happening is contrary to the democratic way of life," he lamented.

Capulong, 51, was gunned down while he was maneuvering his vehicle on a vacant lot near a hospital in Barangay Parian at about 6:20 p.m., said Calamba police chief Supt. Roland Bayani.

He was the 128th activist killed in the regime since his accession to power in 2001, said the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog (Bayan-ST) in a statement.

He was also the fourth high-ranking leader of Bayan murdered in the last three years.

A bystander who saw the killing told police that the motorcycle gunmen wearing a bonnet alighted from a motorcycle and approached the victim while firing at him.

The killer then boarded the motorcycle and sped toward the city proper.

Capulong succumbed to four bullet wounds in the jaw, left side of the body and chest.

Bayani said investigators were hopeful that they could produce an artist's sketch of the killer as the bonnet did not cover his face.

"Based on our initial investigation, the killing was planned, for we have logic doing so from our investigation," Bayani said.

Military's role

Emilio said the government could not hide the fact that the president pronounced the public is that military personnel were behind the killings of political dissidents, like those belonging to Bayan and its allied organizations.

"Whether [the accusation that the military is behind the killings is] true or not, she has got to act and act decisively. She cannot just issue a denial. She is the commander-in-chief. That entails a lot of responsibility so that our safety as citizens can be maintained and preserved," he lamented.

He added that although the government's insinuations that members of the left themselves could be behind the killings might be possible, it was still the responsibility of the government to find out the truth about such allegations.

"The speculations should not continue. It's the government's role to go into it and find out the truth of what had happened. If it cannot do it, this government is unable," he said.

Bayanie, the widow of Capulong, said she could not think of anybody who would want her husband dead.

"He was very kind and helpful to others. He never had any enemies and was soft-spoken," the grieving widow said, adding, "I want justice for my husband. I want to know who the killers are and why they did this to him. Among kasalanan ng asawa ko?"

Bayanie said her husband had filed a leave from Bayan to focus on organizing the "Serbisyo ng Bayan" project of Bayan-Metro Rizal. Capulong is the chairman of the Serbisyo ng Bayan-Metro Rizal and secretary-general of Barangay Lingu. The project was supposed to be inaugurated on May 31.

Surveillance

Armand Alforello, secretary general of Bayan-ST, said Capulong had just attended a meeting of residents who were being evicted from a contested property in Balintawak-Kaladkaran when he was killed.

He said the residents had sought their help in seeking a settlement with the owner of the property.

"I think just recently [a] forces the situation of the residents there who are in danger in losing their homes. He was trying to find out how he could be of help in them," Alforello said.

Emilio said that two weeks before the killing, his brother had told him that he received unidentified texts calling him.

The Calabarzon police director on Thursday revealed a special task group to look into Capulong's killing.

Chief Supt. Pompeyo Mable offered P50,000 to anyone who could provide information that would lead to the identity and arrest of the suspects.

He appointed Mable to head Task force Capulong.

"We assure the family of Capulong that the PNP and the military will exert all efforts to solve this killing," Mable told the reporters.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., chief of the military's Southern Luzon Command, condemned the killing and ordered the undercover of the military on the investigation.

Capulong was the brother of retired Army Gen. Hinatey Capulong.

"We believe that our sentiments before. I'm just reiterating it, especially now that (the victim was a brother) of a military officer," Cabuay explained.

He said he had ordered Brig.Gen. Roland Detabali, chief of the Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade, to coordinate with Mable in the investigation of all leftist killings.

With a report from Delfin Mallari Jr.

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

INSIDE

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5 dolphins beached in Dagupan village

DAGUPAN CITY—Five dolphins, one of them with baby stomach, were found beached in the coastal village of Sabangan here on Tuesday.

Mindy Bonario, chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research center here, said local residents found the beshmoned dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) swimming in the waters at about 10 a.m. and reported the sightings of the six mammals to the city agriculture office.

Bonario said four dolphins returned to deeper waters while residents placed the wounded dolphin in a fish cage in the area. BFAR personnel treated the dolphin before it was released to the sea.

But at about 3 p.m. that day, Bonario said members of the local maritime police brought a wounded dolphin to the BFAR research center for treatment.

"We were not sure if it was the same dolphin which we treated and brought back to the sea earlier that day," Bonario said.

He said the dolphin was already dehydrated when it reached the center. The dolphin died almost an hour later.

In November 1997, 11 dolphins were found in the same village but only three of them were saved. Some daughters by raiders.

Erlando Estrella-Fajutag, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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Iranian gov't to fund 5 hospitals in ARMM

By Charlie Saldua
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—THE IRANIAN government has approved "in principle" to fund a proposed project that involves the construction of five 50-bed hospitals in the autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Ameen Gogo, ARMM information director, said the project envisioned to put up one hospital for each of the five provinces in the region—Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan—at a cost of over P2 million.

Ambassador Jalal Rahimi of the Islamic Republic of Iran assured the ARMM government during his meeting with Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan in Makati City on Saturday that his mission will soon be forthcoming.

Gogo said the governor was optimistic that by 2007, five new hospitals would augment the medical service of 29 government-run hospitals.

Efforts to tap foreign donor countries to help the impoverished ARMM have always been the prerogative of local leaders due to the national government's perennial bodypolitic problems.

Government hospitals

"Of the 29 government hospitals in operation, only three could qualify as secondary hospitals, while the rest are mostly primary with both categories having a total bed capacity of 945," said ARMM Health Secretary Lunga Pundi.

Rahimian has expressed Iran's concern over smuggling Muslim arms and commodities in the world, saying it has been the policy of his government to extend assistance to brothers in need like those in the ARMM.

Ampatuan expressed gratitude to Iran and other "outside assistance" give toward developing the autonomous region.

He cited the arrival next month of the ICU-loading hospital, a huge Navy ship that would offer various health services.

Ampatuan and local leaders of Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu were asked to coordinate with health officials in their areas to facilitate all the requirements so that they would avoid themselves of free surgical, medical and dental services that the American specialists would provide.

Pundi said the naval hospital, manned by nearly 700 personnel, would also perform humanitarian, disarming, reindoctrination services and program assistance on the possible entry of the swine influenza.

PATIENTS needing surgery board the USNS Mercy at Philippine Navy personnel from the Naval Special Operations Group provide right security. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

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Sipalay police force sacked for negligence

By Carla P Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE ENTIRE POLICE FORCE in Sipalay City in Negros Occidental has been relieved after three inmates and two minor offenders bolted out of detention yesterday and brought with them two high-powered firearms.

The three inmates escaped from the police station in Sipalay, 178 km south of here, at about 11:45 a.m., with the help of the two minors who were under the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Police investigators believed the two minors caused all the problem of the detention cell of the runaways.

The DSWD office is beside the police station on the ground floor of a building next to City Hall.

The minors, aged 16 and 17, were with the three inmates identified as Ricardo Lumanta, 18; Mosaky Morell, 18; and Ray Alquiran, 20. They brought with them two M-16 rifles with clean magazines containing ammunition.

Lumanta is facing murder charges while Morell and Alquiran are both charged with homicide murder. One of the minors was facing charges of attempted robbery while the other was charged with theft.

Shortly after the escape, Negros Occidental police director Senior Supt. Charles Calimag ordered the relief of Sipalay police chief Senior Insp. Bradley Cuizon and his 228 policemen.

They were ordered to undergo retraining in Himigaonon town pending investigation of the escape of the detainees.

Calimag designated Chief Insp. Jonah John Tew, provincial police intelligence chief, as acting head of the Sipalay police station.

The 228 policemen, on the other hand, were replaced by 30 policemen who had been undergoing from Ranger Orientation Course.

Calimag said the relief of the Sipalay police force should send a strong message to all chiefs of police not to be lax in securing detainees in their jails.

Army soldiers in northern Negros had joined in the hunt for the escapees.

6 inmates escape from Cebu city jail

By Jhoeven Mapalican
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—SIX INMATES ESCAPED shortly before 4 a.m. on Friday at the city jail.

The escapees were Ronely Rapsik, 23, of Barangay Banilad; Randy Jaen, 22, of Barangay Bonbon; Edgardo Bermoy, 26, of Barangay Basak; Jimmy Abellanosa, 20, and Garrick Gallegos, 22, both of Barangay Talamban; and Cesar Salvan, 28, of Barangay Basak, all in Mandaue.

Supt. Elmo Hernandez, Bureau Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) jail warden, said his men recaptured two while boarding a jeep near JY Square Mall in Barangay Lahug, barely a kilometer from the facility.

"Our jail guards with the support of the policemen are conducting 'hot pursuit' operations against the remaining four escapees," Hernandez said.

The escapees sneaked out of the old and dilapidated jail after punching a hole in the left side of the perimeter fence near the basketball court in front of Camp Lapu-Lapu, headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Central Command, Hernandez said.

The inmates pounded the fence with stones and a sweet tuber to make the hole.

The jailbreak was discovered by the guards-on-duty, SO2 Leo Galinda at 4 a.m.

Hernandez immediately relieved the two jail guards-on-duty—SO1 Hekelamae Tenorio and SO1 Freddie Perez—who were assigned at Towers 2 and 3. They were the nearest to the hole created by the six prisoners.

Of the five remaining escapees, only Rapsik has been convicted of murder and sentenced with life imprisonment.

Lafayette asks Sorsogon court to dismiss case

SORSOGON CITY—THE ADMINISTRATION Lafayette Mining Co. has asked the Sorsogon trial court here to dismiss a civil case filed against it by more than 1,000 fisherfolk, citing technical defects in the complaint.

Lawyer Dindo Arevalo, the firm's counsel, filed the motion to dismiss Civil Case No. 2006-5030, saying it failed a certification of non-forum shopping from the complainants as required under the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure.

The case was filed early this year by Jeremy Gil Goyal, representing the fisherfolk from the municipalities faced hit by the fish waste that gripped the province after the mine spills at the Lafayette mine site in Buga-Buga Island in Gubat.

The complainants have blamed the mining firm for the loss of income they suffered after consumers stopped buying fish, particularly those coming from the vicinity of Prieto-Diaz, Gubat, Barcelona and Bulusan, and Pilar district in Sorsogon City, for fear that they were contaminated.

The fisherfolk were seeking P100 million for the reduced fish December 2005 for lost income; P200,000 per individual for moral damages, P1 million in technical assistance fund, and 25 per cent of total recovered amount as attorney's fee.

The counsel for the fisherfolk said the power of attorney granted to him by the complainants covered the situation of a certification of nonforum shopping and that to threaten to file complaint was a case "lapse of IDs yet."

Lafayette argued otherwise, saying the certification must come from the complainants themselves.

Lopez also said that "the highest attested of authenticated public deed will be considered" on matters to hearing.

Judge Nicanor Villanueva of RTC Branch 52 said he had yet to set the date for the hearing of the petition.

—With Lubaton, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

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ROUNDUP

Illegal loggers warned

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato—The days are numbered for unscrupulous illegal loggers in the municipality of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, as the local government unit has warned that it will file charges against those who will be caught violating the ban on logging in the municipality.

Mayor Antonio Bagani said that the municipal government has already formed a task force to apprehend illegal loggers in the municipality.

Bagani said that the task force will be composed of members of the Philippine National Police, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office, the Municipal Agriculture Office and the Municipal Engineering Office.

He said that the task force will be tasked to confiscate illegally cut logs and lumber and to arrest those who are caught violating the ban on logging in the municipality.

Bagani said that the task force will be tasked to confiscate illegally cut logs and lumber and to arrest those who are caught violating the ban on logging in the municipality.

—Chris Panganiban, PIA Western Bureau

Assassination plot

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—An assassination plot against Mayor George Sukon of Koronadal, South Cotabato following the arrest of the suspected gunman on Thursday, has triggered a tense situation in the city.

Sukon's spokesman Atty. Ronald Sumaoang said that the suspect, identified as Edwin Dumalag, 27, of Koronadal, was arrested by police at a checkpoint in Barangay Zone I, Koronadal City.

Sumaoang said that Dumalag was allegedly hired by a group of people to kill the mayor.

Sukon's spokesman Atty. Ronald Sumaoang said that the suspect, identified as Edwin Dumalag, 27, of Koronadal, was arrested by police at a checkpoint in Barangay Zone I, Koronadal City.

—Ayoko Zoleta, PIA Western Bureau

Gang member nabbed

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato—The Special Reaction Group (SRG) of the Lagonoy police arrested a suspected member of the notorious Cabo Verde robbery gang in Barangay Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, on Thursday.

Police said Robert John Bagtas, 28, of Purok 7, Barangay Poblacion, Lake Sebu, was arrested by police at a checkpoint in Barangay Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, on Thursday.

—Marlon Ramos, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

Tourism bill questioned

QUEZON CITY—Tourism-related businesses in the province of Quezon are questioning the constitutionality of a bill that would require them to pay a tourism fee of P100 per person.

The bill, which was filed by Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III of the 4th district of Quezon, would require all tourists visiting the province to pay the fee.

—Marlon Ramos, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

Lightning kills 3

CAMP OLIVE, Laguna—Three fishermen were killed when they were struck by lightning while fishing in Laguna de Bay on Thursday afternoon.

The victims were identified as Roberto Cruz, 45, of Barangay Poblacion, Calauan, Laguna; Ricardo Santos, 38, of Barangay Poblacion, Calauan, Laguna; and Eduardo Reyes, 52, of Barangay Poblacion, Calauan, Laguna.

—Marlon Ramos, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

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Firm to rehabilitate Toledo copper mine

By Irene R. Sino-Cruz
PDI Corpus Bureau

CEBU CITY—ATLAS CONSOLIDATED MINING and Development Corp. (ACMDC) will soon implement the $160-million rehabilitation of its copper mine in Toledo City.

ACMDC executive vice president and chief financial officer Medel Buckingham said the project would take 12-15 months from the start of de-watering of the Canlaon pit.

Buckingham said the draining of the flooded underground mine would take 4-6 months, with cost projected to reach $5 million.

He said the company was still canvassing prices of the equipment to be used in the de-watering.

The reopening of the copper mine, scheduled in 2007, is expected to pose an economic and social benefit to Toledo.

During a simple ceremony held on Wednesday, ACMDC president and chief executive Rolando Zandro turned over to Mayor Isidro Espinosa Zandro one million shares of stocks worth P6 million (present market value) and a check worth P1 million, representing the balance of the cash contribution of the company's real estate taxes payable to the city government.

Zandro said the company and the city government earlier reached a compromise agreement, which reduced ACMDC's payables from P200 million to P100 million. Of the P100 million, P35 million is in cash, while the balance is in the form of shares of stocks and some of Atlas' properties, Suarez said.

The company will also start paying the retirement benefits of its legitimate employees of some 81 who comes up with the memorandum, he added.

ACMDC assistant vice president and assistant manager Rodrigo Gil said the company had to pay close to P101 million, the balance of the original P160 million owed to its employees.

Zandro said the company were excited at the reopening of the mine site as it would again revive the city's economy.

The company has entered into an agreement with Covenant Asian Special Opportunities Portfolio (Cayop) for a financing package worth $40 million.

Cayop will initially infuse $10 million into Cantoc Copper Corp., a $43 million subsidiary, which will rehabilitate the copper mine.

The infusion will be made in two tranches: A $5 million convertible bond upfront and a $30-million subscription for new shares upon the finalization of a mine rehabilitation and off-take agreement for the copper project.

Proceeds from the convertible bond will be used to finance the draining of the underground mine.

Suarez said the company was working on possible ways to start copper production before the end of the year of the mine rehabilitation.

Buckingham said the company wanted to generate earnings while the price of copper in the world market was at an all-time high.

An earlier start in mining operations will help the company save part of the funds for rehabilitation while the bottom will come from outside sources, he said.

Open-pit production at Toledo started in 1955 at 9,000 tons daily and reached 11,000 tons daily by 1977, making it the fifth largest in the world.

After the rehabilitation is completed, Atlas daily output is estimated at 42,000 tons, according to Gil.

Buckingham said the mine's resources could last up to 40 years or more. "There is potential for longer operations," he added.

According to the company, the reopening of the copper mine would result in exports of up to $1 billion over 12 years.

In addition, the company, upon full operation, will be employing around of 3,000 workers.

Tourism body urges Sorsogon natives to revisit province

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THE SORSOGON PROVINCIAL TOURISM Council (SPTC) has urged natives of Sorsogon to revisit the province, which, it said, offers a lot of places for tourist buyers.

On June 28, the council, headed by Lucio Olivar Arnaiz, will hold its second Mrs. Bulik-Sorsogon and Mrs. Bulik-Bicol pageant to raise for Sorsogon City's Pili Festival on June 1-30.

The pageant is a fund-raising campaign under the Bulik Sorsogon Bulik Bicol 2000 program that also includes the Sorsogon Provincial Museum and Heritage Center, according to a news release.

Mrs. Bulik Sorsogon candidates are those living abroad while candidates for Mrs. Bulik-Bicol are those in the Philippines but residing outside the province.

The delightful effect Sorsogonon folk and friends are organized to help share and experience the warmth and hospitality of their province-mates and mates has with old friends and relatives while enjoying the food, beaches and natural beauty of Sorsogon.

Bulik Sorsogonon and friends are also expected to relish the province via office visit, or to experience with whole drama or bounding in love, seeing the warm rice sun shake, and relaxing in creation of thick, white and golden sands.

Food lovers can also savor the province's cuisines and delicacies, like the pinangat, spicy Bicol Express, kalo's, freshly caught fish from the Pacific and Gulan areas, the crabs, and pili.

Visitors can dish numerous souvenirs, while swimmers can see the province's unmistakable and cool or hot pools, such as the Twin Falls of Barang, Magsok of Balocaue, Ubok of Cataingan, and the Mount-sighting and backdrop of Irosin.

Others can visit, just the caves of Daraga and Cabo of Manoog, the hidden coves of Sta. Magdalena, the waterfall of Pilar and Prieto Diaz, and the protected Balocaue, called the Switzerland of the Orient.

The old Church of Barcelona, the old houses of Juban, and the landscaped daggayan in Pilar, Bagalayan also have historic forts, the province release said. Details about the province can be read at www.bulikbicol.ph.org.

SLUMPING or whole stock replies are for sale in Gubat, Sorsogon.

READY FOR CLASS OPENING
Children, accompanied by their parents, shop for school supplies in Davao City in preparation for the start of classes in June.

34 colleges in Caraga to increase tuition

BUTUAN CITY—THIRTY-FOUR COLleges in Caraga will raise tuition by at least 7.6 percent this school year, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has ordered.

Dr. Lourdes Gonzales, education supervisor of the CHED Caraga, disclosed that of the 53 colleges in the four-province region, 34 had been ordered to raise tuition.

Gonzales said the approved 7.6-percent increase was based on current inflation rate set by the national government.

Among those given the go-signal by the commission are Davao College-Agusan Colleges, Butuan City Colleges, Caraga Institute of Technology and Saint Theresa's College in Tandag, Surigao del Sur.

Gonzales brushed aside criticisms that the approved raise "without the benefit of consultation" between leaders of concerned students' government and the school administrations.

"Based on the guidelines imposed by the CHED national office, only those seeking increases beyond 7.6 percent will have to undergo such consultations," Gonzales said.

She, however, said the agency still had to monitor if the proceeds from the tuition increases went to their intended school programs.

Under the CHED memorandum, 70 percent of the increases should go to salaries and benefits of faculty members, 20 percent to school development, and 10 percent to the upgrading of textbooks and other educational materials.

Nobody heard visioning the policy would have sanctions ranging from revocation of permit, nonaccreditation to downgrading of various school standards according to time and possible threats, Gonzales said.

"We are now tasked with looking and monitoring how the money collected from such increases will be spent, and we have a task force [to implement] that," Gonzales added.

Rondelio Gallegos, PIA Mindanao

More programs, services for kids urged in Visayas

By Hector B Bargen Jr.
PhilStar Bureau

KALIBO CITY—CHILD LABORERS IN THE Visayas are calling on the government to implement more child-oriented programs and services to stem the growing number of children who are forced to work.

In a statement issued at the culmination of the First Visayas Kids Children's Congress on Saturday, 141 child delegates urged the government to provide more access to education, alternative livelihood programs for their parents and stricter implementation of laws on children.

These were among the 14 recommendations drafted by the children during the three-day meeting organized by the Pag-Asenso mga Batanguena Kalaksakan (AMK) initiative.

The AMK Initiative is a four-year project (2003-07) funded by the US Department of Labor and implemented by the National Coalition of Children Participation.

The children, aged 10-14 years old, joined workshops and cultural programs to show their work experiences in Region Occidental, Region Oriental, Cebu and Iloilo.

Aa priority in our country version, the number of child laborers is increasing. Many of us are among those subjected to the worst forms of child labor," the children said in their statement in Filipino.

The children said most of their fellow children were forced to drop out of school because of poverty.

"We have observed that the government cannot fulfill its obligation to care for our rights and welfare as children," they said.

Unenforced laws

Laws that were supposed to protect their rights and punished those who abused them were not being implemented, they said.

The Visayas has among the highest number of child laborers in the country. At least 200,000 in Central Visayas and 349,000 in Eastern Visayas.

The two regions are next only to Southern Tagalog, which has the most number of child laborers at 414,000, according to the 2000 survey of the International Labor Organization and the National Statistics Office.

Primo S. Gonzaga has around 3,20,000 child laborers, according to the Department of Labor and Employment.

Among those who are working in a young age is 24-year-old Reynaldo Jose Dequito, of San Dionisio.

Dequito has been helping her mother sell shrimp paste at the neighboring town of Ajuy since she was 8 years old.

She spends her weekdays at their stall in the town market from 5 to 11 a.m. She is grade-five, which serves as her school allowance.

"It is hard. At times that I have to help my family," Dequito told the Inquirer.

The most feared child labor exists in organized syndicates, involved in prostitution, mining and quarrying, deep-sea fishing, commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work, according to an ABK Initiative information sheet.

Protection councils

The children recommended the organization and activation of Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC).

The BCPC, headed by the barangay chair, is mandated to plan programs and activities for children. It has counterparts on the municipal, city and provincial levels.

But many of the BCPCs do not function, said Ary Milla of the Department of the Interior and Local Government in Western Visayas.

Milla said that of the 4,849 barangays in Western Visayas, only 330 or 8 percent have functional BCPCs.

"Many officials do not see the importance of the BCPCs because they believe that children do not need specific programs because they also benefit from other programs of the barangay," Milla told reporters.

Kalibo City Councilor Aurelio Sergio Tapan said many politicians "introduced" to turn dealing with children.

Tapan said a widespread campaign should be launched to disseminate provisions of Republic Act No. 9231 or the "Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act."

"This is relatively new law and the public should know that they could be jailed if they subject children to child labor," said Tapan.

WHY WE WANT A UNICAMERAL PARLIAMENT

So that the Filipino people will not be misled and misinformed, here is what we mean when we say: **ABOLISH THE SENATE and the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

Since July 2004 when the 13th Congress was inaugurated, here is the score from the congressional ledger: **51 bills of national application and 708 bills of local application already approved on third reading by the House of Representatives *have been gathering dust for months in the Senate.***

The list of bills is too long to fit this space. We've collated most of the 51 national bills, majority of which are urgent reform measures, because they may never see the light of day in the Senate.

The Senate's inaction is an absolute waste of people's money. Just one law enacted by the Senate and the House of Representative costs the government almost P700 million in taxpayers money.**

The Senate's conduct leads to one inescapable conclusion: It's time to shift the country to a parliamentary government and a unicameral (one-house) parliament!

** Source: Manila Standard Today

Bills of National Application Long Approved by the House and Pending in the Senate
As of April 25, 2006

Bill No.	Short Title	Transmitted to the Senate
HB04710	General Appropriations Act of 2006	3/21/06
HB04839	Anti-Terrorism Act of 2005	1/24/06
HB04829	Bioethanol Fuel Act of 2005	6/24/05
HB03281	The Investments Incentives Code of the Philippines	12/15/04
HB03740	Amending RA No. 9178 by Extending the Utilization Period of Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund	1/9/05
HB04869	Anti-Smuggling Act of 2005	6/24/05
HB02933	Granting a One-Time Tax Amnesty on all Unpaid National Internal Revenue Taxes for Taxable Year 2003 and Prior Years	12/15/04
HB04284	Omnibus Housing and Urban Development Act	10/12/05
HB04275	Ensuring Objectivity and the Protection of Witnesses in the Prosecution of Cases by the Ombudsman, Allowing Private Lawyers to Act as Prosecutors on his behalf	6/1/05
HB03835	Socialized and Low-Cost Housing Loan Restructuring Act of 2005	3/16/05
HB04881	Billion Trees Act of 2005	5/4/05
HB05008	The University of the Philippines Charter of 2005	2/7/06
HB03319	Creating the Office of the Comptroller of the AFP	4/6/06
HB01962	Amending RA 340, as Amended, which Established a Uniform Retirement System for the AFP	4/6/06
HB04946	The Land Administration Reform Act of 2005	11/28/05
HB03309	Frontline Service Information Act of 2004	2/8/05
HB00868	Prohibiting the Detention of Live or Dead Patients in Hospitals and Medical Clinics for Non-payment of Hospital Bills or Medical Expenses	5/25/05
HB04802	Philippine Cooperative Code of 2005	10/13/05
HB04835	Amending RA 53, As amended, by Including Within Its Coverage Journalists from Broadcast, News Agencies and Internet Publications	11/28/05

Senate Bills pending in the House of Representatives:

SB1967	An Act Redefining The Term "Veteran" Thereby Amending Further Republic Act. No. 6948, as Amended
SB2027	An Act Declaring the Month of February of Every Year as Liver and Hepatitis-B Awareness Month

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GMA, world leaders send rescuers, pledge relief aid

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY JOINED countries around the world in ramping up quick-fund assistance to Indonesia's victims and cities pounded to rubble by an earthquake that left thousands dead or homeless.

President Macapagal-Arroyo expressed sorrow over the deaths and devastation wrought by the Indonesian earthquake and ordered a humanitarian mission to be dispatched here.

"On behalf of the Filipino people, I extend our sympathies to the people of Indonesia who have once more suffered great loss and pain in the face of this tragedy. We are deeply saddened," Mr. Arroyo said.

She said a humanitarian mission would be organized and deployed in the quake-ravaged region soon. The Philippines sent a group of doctors and civic workers to Indonesia when it was devastated by an earthquake and tsunami in 2004.

"We are now arranging that (humanitarian mission). It will probably be just medical personnel, no military personnel," said Gloria Bakwena, executive director of the National Disaster Coordinating Council.

Bakwena said the NDCC would coordinate with the Department of Health and the Department of Social Welfare and Development in organizing the humanitarian mission. "They will leave as soon as possible," he said.

Mr. Arroyo said the international community should help Indonesia, in the same way foreign governments assisted the Philippines following the deadly landslide in Southern Leyte early this year.

"We have a duty to help our neighbors as well as the whole of humanity in times like these, just as the world came to our rescue in the failed Ormoc landslide," she said.

Global community

According to her, the Department of Foreign Affairs is also checking if there were Filipinos among the quake victims or assistance could be rendered here.

As photos and footage emerged of stunned, unkempt survivors fleeing through crumbled buildings, the global community instantly offered millions of dollars. Tons of supplies and humanitarian assistance were also on their way.

South Korea on Sunday rushed in 19 doctors and rescuers, and $200,000 worth of emergency medical gear, the foreign ministry said.

Over the weekend, Malaysia sent about 300 disaster relief experts, five divers, several paramedics and a crew of boat, blankets and other essentials.

Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer offered A$5 million (US$3.27 million) for emergency food, shelter and medical supplies. He said international teams would study whether more was needed.

"We are looking at what we can do to help," Downer said on television. "It may be that we'll have to do quite a lot."

Japan was preparing to send relief goods and financial aid. Tokyo had already sent a team of seven doctors and nurses, the foreign ministry said.

Separately, the Japanese Red Cross Society said it had decided to contribute 100 million yen (US$950,000) in emergency disaster relief.

China's Premier Wen Jiabao offered $2 million and said Beijing would send search personnel and materials as needed, the official Xinhua News agency said.

Singapore said it was sending a 33-member medical team, 40 disaster aid rescue workers, and three search dogs. It has also pledged $50,000 worth of emergency supplies.

Thailand's foreign ministry said it planned to send aid and was set to decide on the details on Monday.

Red Cross

New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark pledged $2.5 million (US$1.6 million) and her country would give more if needed.

The Asian Development Bank assured Indonesia's government "of ADB's full support and cooperation in rebuilding lives affected by this devastating earthquake."

Outside Asia, the Red Cross appealed for $1 million (some euros) ($0.6 million) for survivors.

"We have a duty to help our neighbors as well as the whole of humanity in times like these'

How earthquakes happen

Result of a sudden release of tension inside the planet's crust

The Indonesian Red Cross, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, immediately mobilized more than 400 volunteers and staff, the Geneva-based federation said in a statement.

It said its experts in the quake zone said about 200,000 people have been left homeless.

In Aceh's Banda city, "9 to 10 percent of homes and buildings were damaged or destroyed, while electricity and water services have also been affected throughout the region," said Amale Torbiznesca, head of the federation's delegation in Indonesia.

"Workers are continuing to clean the city and many people remain trapped under buildings and rubble."

The Rome-based UN World Food Program said it has a 181-plane with enough food to feed 60,000 people for two days. Trucks carrying another eight thousands of food were on their way, with fortified noodles and biscuits.

The UN children's agency Unicef said it was ready to send in tents, hygiene kits, health kits and school supplies.

"In cities in natural disasters children and the elderly suffer disproportionately because they are least able to react quickly," said Unicef Executive Director Ann Veneman.

The European Union has granted up to 66 million euros ($80 million) in emergency aid.

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini ordered a chartered of 27 tons of tents, blankets, cooking kits, plastic sheeting, generators, pumps and water purification equipment.

Switzerland said it would send two experts and donate $300,000 to the Indonesian Red Cross.

The Italian Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church, saying it was heeding the Pope's appeal to help Asia, said it was allocating almost 2 million euros from $2.5 million.

Leaders in Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland as and Spain also offered help.

Reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Dona Pazzibugan and AP

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Her last words were 'Daddy, Daddy'

Tens of thousands of people spent Saturday night sleeping in any open space available—on streets, in cemeteries fields, even on the narrow paths between rice fields. Power and telecommunications are still severed in the region, adding to the terror of aftershocks.

About 400 aftershocks had shaken the region as of Sunday noon, with the strongest measuring magnitude 5.2, said Hendi, an official at the Bandung Geophysics Agency. Agency Mary Sabintsian are only one name.

Survivors searched the ruins of their homes on Sunday for anything still usable and complained that they hadn't received any aid. International agencies and other nations pledged millions of dollars of aid. (*See story on this page.*)

"We're short of everything—clothes, food, water, all are gone. We are poor people, but our lives were valued," said Ibuk Wiryanto, 61, whose house was destroyed.

Doctors struggled to care for the injured, hundreds of whom were lying on ghastly sheets, down in makeshift tents, newspapers outside overcrowded hospitals, some hoisted to intravenous drips dangling from trees.

Bloodstains littered the floor at Regaloh's Dr. Soejiko Hospital, along with piles of soiled bandages and medicine-dropper.

Pediatrician Ismawati Sembiring is the last to temporary shelters set up in the parking lot and corridors.

'Too many patients'

"We have too many patients and they're still arriving," said Sri, a doctor, adding that the hospital had received more than 2,000 patients.

Though some corpses were pulled from the rubble only Sunday, residents in villages situated by epicenter said there were few people or bodies trapped beneath collapsed homes, mostly simple brick and wood structures.

But in Bat, a small village on Banda's southern corridors, 20 residents were not under a group. They found the bodies of a woman and her three children on Saturday. The residents were still trying to find the family's father, Pernadin.

Most of the dead were found in 18 large graveyards within hours of the disaster, in line with Islamic tradition.

In Bat, villagers set up camps (due to wear injuries, but they were impaired by shortages of medicine and equipment. A group of women cooked catfish caught in a nearby pond for dozens of people huddled under a large tent.

The earthquake hit at 3:34 a.m., catching in the beds and sending with trembling doors. Survivors screamed as they ran from their homes, some clutching bloodied children and the elderly.

Series of disasters

The bombs was the latest in a series of disasters to hit Indonesia—including the 2004 tsunami that ravaged Aceh province, terrorist attacks, a widening bird flu outbreak and the threat of eruption from nearby Mount Merapi.

The quake's epicenter was 46 km south of the Merapi volcano, and actively monitored soon after the tremor. A large burst opened his clouds and rose debris cascading some 2.5 km down its western flank. No one was injured because nearby residents had already been evacuated.

Rescuing Evelyanto of the energy and mineral resources would use try whether the quake caused the volcanic activity, but he warned that it could trigger a larger eruptions.

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic, is prone to seismic activity due to its location on the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin. It has the largest number of volcanoes in the world—76.

Read in about 1,200 km southwest of Aceh province, where 131,000 people died in a December 2004 tsunami that was triggered by a magnitude-9.1 earthquake under the sea.

At least 4,332 people were killed in the quake, according to an official in the affected areas. The medical authority said around 4,000 died, but numbers in one of the hardest hit districts were disputed.

Another 298,000 people were left homeless, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Temple damaged

Officials said the famed 7th century Borobudur Buddhist temple complex of Indonesia's most popular tourist attractions—was not affected by the quake. But Prambanan, a spectacular Hindu temple to the southeast, suffered serious damage, with hundreds of stone carvings and blocks scattered around the ancient site.

The Hindu temple will be closed to the public until archeologists are able to determine whether the foundations are damaged, said Agus Sidiyasa, head of the Yogyakarta Archaeological Conservation Agency.

Close to a million tourists visit the Borobudur and Prambanan complex every year. AP

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Temblors jolt Papua, Babuyan, Tonga isles

To page A-2

people on the second Indonesian island of Java on Saturday.

"Sometimes, where there is a big earthquake in one area ... it might upset the tectonic activity in other areas, but not necessarily," Sudrajat said.

"For that, we'd have to analyze a whole lot of archive data to see a certain pattern in terms of volcanic activity," he added. "I don't think there's a related."

Calls to Papua New Guinea's National Disaster Center were unanswered on Sunday and details on injuries or damage were not immediately available.

Police in Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa, said in Ola Ki'epi'epi Islands group capital of Pangai on the north, reported no serious injuries or damage.

"Yes, we felt it," said Constable Siosiua Lata in Pangai, which was near the epicenter.

"There are no damage reports and no injuries—everything's fine," Lata told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

In Nuku'alofa, publisher Hiley Rotuna said the quake was short but sharp.

"My clothesline tilt it and we saved coaming outside the restaurant a result because it was a significant jolt," Rotuna said.

Ring of Fire

Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Indonesia are part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire" where earthquakes and volcanic activity are frequent.

Experts believe the activity in the earth's crust over the past two days—including the awakening of the Mount Merapi volcano near the epicenter of Saturday's quake—are linked to the Ring of Fire.

"There's no doubt they are related to the same cause—the ring of weakness in the earth's surface," said Gerry Cobcon, professor of seismology at RMIT University in Melbourne, yesterday.

The Ring of Fire, which stretches along the western coast of the Americas through the island arcs west of the South Pacific and on through Southeast Asia, is a series of fault lines—or weaknesses—in the hardened upper layers of the earth's surface, known as the crust.

These lines of weakness are the meeting points of huge continental plates that make up the crust and which literally float on the molten rock of the earth's core.

These plates are in constant motion, clashing with each other or moving away from each other, creating tsunami and pressure buildings in their margins.

The more is released through volcanic eruptions, when the molten rock is ejected as magma through fissures in the crust, or via earthquakes, when the pressure causes the crust to buckle and shift.

Most of these seismic events are small and occur under the sea, where the majority of the tectonic/plate energies are found.

But occasionally they generate volcanic explosions, earthquakes or landslides.

According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), an average of 16.4 quakes of 7.0 plus strength occur on the Ring of Fire each year. Indonesia has suffered from three catastrophic earthquakes in the past 20 months.

On Dec. 26, 2004, the 9.3-magnitude quake unleashed tsunamis that crashed into Indian Ocean shorelines and killed 184,000 people in Indonesia's Aceh province alone.

Six hundred people were killed in the 8.7-quake just 160 km to the south on March 28, 2005.

Comparatively small

Gibson said that the flurry of seismic activity of the past days was comparatively small.

"In any given day you would find similar activity greater than this throughout the Pacific region," he said.

"Last week, there was a sequence of earthquakes between New Zealand and Tonga that were far greater—we got up to magnitude of 7.8 on one day," he said. "But nobody knows anything about it because it didn't affect anybody."

Although this activity is the result of the main points in the earth's surface, experts are not convinced that they create a ripple, or domino, effect of one quake setting off another.

"Earthquakes do tend to happen as clusters but they aren't triggered by one another," he said.

"The tensions stress created by [e]arthquakes can travel for hundreds of kilometres and then dissipate. The earth's crust is actually very good at absorbing that energy. —Reports from AFP and AP

UNCERTAIN FUTURE. An unidentified boy ponders his future after surviving the earthquake that killed more than 4,000 people in Indonesia. More than 200,000 people were left homeless by the quake, the second major disaster to strike Indonesia since the December 2004 tsunami that killed 200,000 people across Asia. —AP

HIS ONLY BREAKFAST. Noodles are the only breakfast for one of the many boys injured in the deadly quake that hit Indonesia. More than 10,000 people were injured in the quake. —AP

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SUBTRES 5 3 7

NEWS

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
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US CLEANUP OF MERCURY SPILL. Passenger Rep. Eduardo Zialcita (3rd from right) presents environmentman Louie C. Tiu a coffee table book about the city for his support in the cleanup of the mercury spill at St. Andrew's School Pantalagio. Also in photo are the US Environmental Protection Agency scientists who helped in the cleanup: Philip Compagna, Steve Calloway, Brian Brown and Eleanor Nemedi. At right is Valente Santos of the US Embassy economics section.

Joker to Palace: Stop the 'loose cannons' at PCGG

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. JOKER ARROYO TESTERDAY URGED Malacañang to stop the "loose cannons" in the Presidential Commission on Good Government from striking a deal with the Marcos family and to make its position clear in the matter.

Otherwise, the government would lose the "moral high ground on accountability," the move by administration lawmaker warned.

"The PCGG chair and its commissioners are loose cannons. They can't do that on their own (make deals)," said Arroyo, a former human rights lawyer, in a phone interview.

Backtracking, he stressed, "must stop in to the current PCGG mess and make a policy pronouncement on the matter."

"You can't let these common folk error and lose the government moral high ground on accountability. That's what the government is all about—accountability of public funds," he said.

Resolve criminal, civil cases

The PCGG, under Chair Camilo Sabio, has stepped up efforts to cut down a deal with the family of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, hoping to resolve the criminal and civil cases it has been pursuing against them for past 20 years.

Despite the criticism, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede has said he was pursuing ahead with negotiations over the closing of the Marcos assets estimated at between $5 billion and $10 billion, in exchange for the dropping of all cases.

While the Palace has defended the PCGG moves, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has neither encouraged nor dismissed the PCGG officials' move, hoping a compromise with the Marcoses, presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor has said.

Senator Arroyo stressed that the ill-gotten wealth cases were "historically moral and accountability issues."

"The money issue is incidental because public funds are involved and, therefore, must be recovered. But that is incidental to the moral issue," he said in a statement he issued after the interview.

Principle of accountability

"The statements of the PCGG officials underscore the inherent commitment of the government to uphold the principle of accountability without which no government can long exist," he said.

Abcede came under fire last week for inviting former First Lady Imelda Marcos to his birthday party and even dancing with her.

"What's not to like with that?" he had said, insisting his badmouthing such her would not affect his job at the PCGG.

Arroyo also chided the PCGG officials for negotiating with the Marcoses over pending cases "whose status are not conducive to the government."

"The ruling spells? Our settlement because he is in weak position and the government is not in equal," he said, pointing out that past Supreme Court decisions on Marcos cases had been "generally favorable" to the government.

In a radio interview, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. reiterated that he was open to a deal with the Marcoses on condition they fully disclose all their ill-gotten wealth and the courts are divided 90-10 in favor of the government.

He stressed, however, that only the civil, not the criminal, cases be the subject of any compromise.

Defending Salonga

Arroyo also chided Abcede for belittling the accomplishments of past PCGG chairs, including former Senate President Jovito Salonga who recently criticized the current move to settle with the Marcoses and likened it to the Holocaust victims striking a deal with the Nazis.

Arroyo pointed out that in the recent Iran-Contra hearings it was established that an estimated $960 million had been raised even by previous PCGG administrations to the Department of Agrarian Reform for the land tenancy of beneficiaries in keeping with the law.

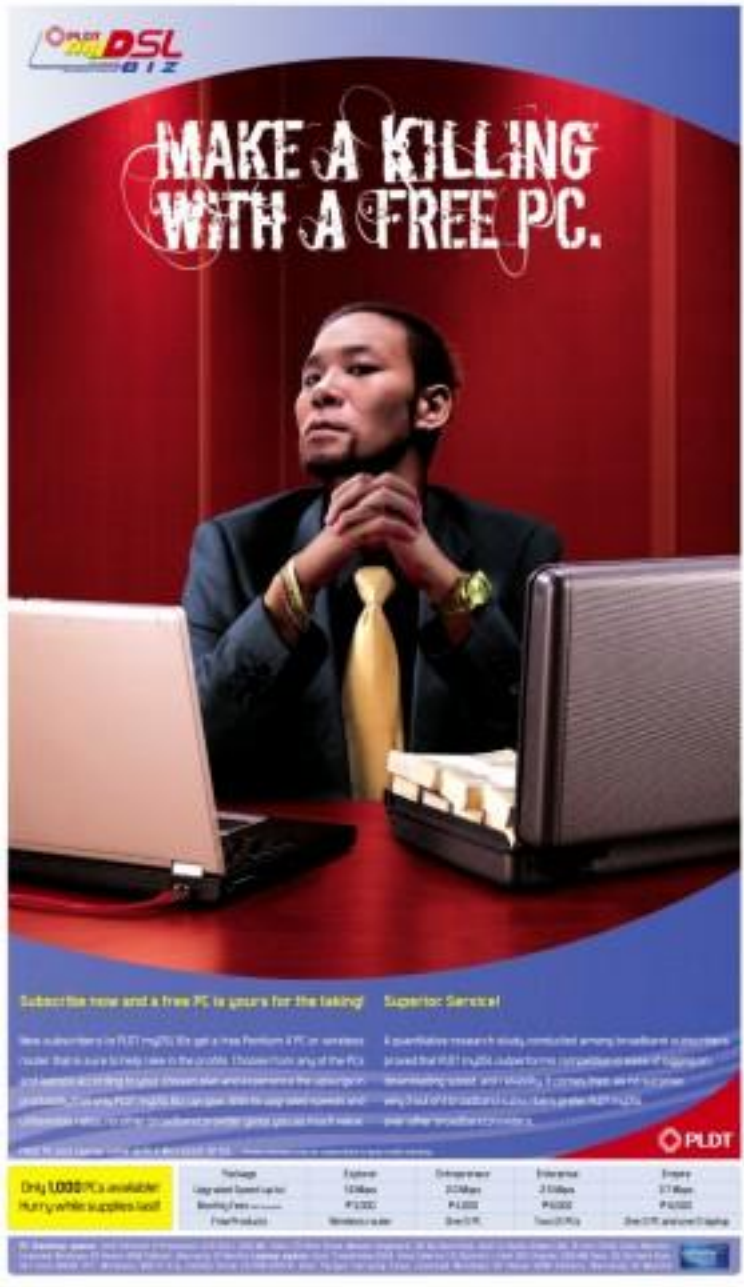
"Without those funds, tenant-based tenancy would not have the lands they presently own," Arroyo said.

"Yet the current PCGG, which did not contribute one centavo to the $96 billion, has the gall to belittle the work of the past commissions under four presidents and claim that it can do better through compromise, overlooking the fact that the issues of the remaining pending cases are not unresolvable to the government," he said.

Arroyo also wondered what could be behind the negotiations between the PCGG and the Marcoses.

"One thing is sickening in all this by-talaba. It is so odious that even before one deals with negotiations, the parties even agree on an inventory or list of what will be discussed," he said.

"Much like Mar roxas and the PCGG are coy, mouth to mouth, but shy [about] specifics. Public heath are involved. The public has the right to know. That cannot be ignored."



Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil
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Rains topple wall; boy killed, 6 hurt

By DJ Yap

A BOY WAS KILLED WHILE SIX PERSONS were hurt the other day after a wall collapsed due to heavy rains and hit several houses in a depressed area in Quezon City.

At around 9 p.m. Saturday, rains poured down on Purok 12, Barangay Commonwealth and floodwater began collecting at the base of a 15-foot wall which separated a compound of drainpipes from the nearby Kaybahayan.

The floodwater later spilled over the wall which collapsed and was swept toward the structures, witnesses said.

A 4-year-old boy identified as John Lloyd Hibale drowned in the floodwater, said investigator PO2 Leo Allan Pasco.

Hibale was rushed to the Fe Kannan Emergency Hospital but he was pronounced dead on arrival at 9:22 p.m.

The boy's mother Rhelvie and his siblings Jhanel, 7, Michael, 12, and Thomy, 12, sustained slight cuts and scratches. They also suffered from electric shock after a live wire fell into the water, Pasco said.

Two other persons identified as Christy Alemara, 35, and Rona Alemara, 1, also sustained slight scratches, police said.

Their dismay, along with the homes of at least three other families, was revealed.

Police said some of the families were planning to file charges against subdivision homeowners who had ordered the construction of the wall.

But the father of the deceased victim, Tomas Sibale, told the Inquirer that they would probably not be able to pursue the case, since they did not have the money for legal fees.

He added, though, that he would take up the matter with barangay officials.

SIMPLE PLEASURES
A boatman rows, content to let his vessel drift as the water while waiting for the sun to set on Manila Bay

QC cops recover stolen van

HOURS AFTER IT WAS TAKEN at gunpoint by three men, a Toyota Innova owned by the daughter of former congressman Roger Aperdel was found abandoned in Quezon City yesterday.

Quezon City police discovered the vehicle of Aperdel's daughter Rosevelyn in Sitio Tolentay, Barangay Batasan Hills at about 9 a.m., several hours after the incident was reported to investigators.

The van, with plate number DDX 472, was stolen on Saturday night by three men wielding .45-cal. pistols, said investigator SPO1 Omar Bernot of the Batasan Hills Police Station.

The victim had just boarded the vehicle, parked along Magsaysay Street in EP 94 Inga, when the suspects approached her and ordered her to get off, police said.

Police initially thought it was a "carjacking" case but they are now investigating other angles after the recovery of the vehicle.

"Nothing was taken from the vehicle. All the car parts and the victim's belongings were intact," Bernot noted.

DF Yap

JUN NITO Alba, Caloocan's retired agriculturist, tends his garden, a 2,500-sq m lot at the back of City Hall which he used to be a garage.

CORN, cabbage, carrots and other vegetables grow in Alba's garden.

Urban gardens grow in Caloocan

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE SIZE OF SPACE SHOULD NOT stop one from having a garden.

"Plants can grow anywhere, even in your own bathroom," said Jun(ito) Alba, Caloocan City chief agriculturist.

He spoke to the barangay officials in spreading the mushroom boom in the city government's urban gardening project held on Cannon Road in Barangay Bagong Silang.

Mushrooms, for example, can be grown inside the bathroom, Alba said. All that one needs is cottonseed and maize—items that cost P100—which can be bought near the cemetery.

"The moisture in the air when someone takes a shower and the carbon dioxide emitted by the human body is sufficient for the plant to grow," the agriculturist said.

Any space available

According to Alba, plant growing should not depend on the space available.

Plants could also be grown in plastic cups, soft drink bottles, discarded toilet bowls, old tires, or any container which you could put soil into.

"By putting up your own garden, you could enjoy plants and roots as well," Alba said.

To prove it, the chief agriculturist gave the barangay a tour of his urban garden—a 2,500-sq m lot which used to be the garage of the City Hall.

In the middle of the garden are an array of plastic cups, old tires and repurposed containers in which a variety of plants are growing.

Different varieties

Also found in the garden are assorted vegetables—from pechaber, cassava, kangkong, sweet, broccoli, cauliflower and pechay—among others. Since news about the urban garden broke out, some businessmen and residents in nearby areas have been clamoring to the area to buy vegetables.

"Our prices are cheaper compared to wet markets and buyers can even harvest the vegetables themselves if they want to," Barangay Bagong Silang Chairman Alba added.

There are also herbal plants, trees and medicinal shrubs which would be planted here so along major roads in the city.

Alba refers to his garden as "a showcase which could be replicated in other areas in the city where there are idle lands."

He said the project is in line with the Caloocan City government's greening program which aims to alleviate poverty and in the process, bring crimes down.

"Instead of getting [those] which usually ends in fighting, people could be busy planting and talking about their crops," the agriculturist said.

Aside from encouraging food sufficiency, garden tenders would also open up hungry at long as they plant vegetables, Alba added.

Be pointed to radish, cabbage, pechay, carrots, tomato, chinese kangkong, onions and "camporis" like eggplant, pechay, upo and squash as low-maintenance plants that could be grown easily.

Ready to share

"Our urban garden residents are ready to share their skills with anyone who is interested in having a garden of their own," Alba said.

According to him, he has long been advocating urban gardens but failed to realize the support of previous officials of the city government.

"There were projects in the past but they did not push through because of politics," Alba said. Thanks to Jun Lito Sotto and City Mayor Enrico Echiverri, the projects has finally gotten off the ground.

After its launching last month, some idle lands (or the city with the permission of their owners), have already been converted into community gardens. Barangay Bagong Silang, the biggest barangay in the city, will also soon have its own garden and mini-gardens, Alba said.

"We also want to encourage the putting up of community gardens, particularly in densely populated areas where there are lots of rubber tires," he said, adding that he is also willing to help in the project.

TO GROW maybe seen, all you need is enthusiasm and room.

Alba urges those interested to visit his office at the city hall compound to get more information.

MMDA begins clearing sidewalks

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT Authority will be clearing sidewalks leading to schools starting today to help students get to their classes quickly and safely.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday that the agency's Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group would be conducting the clearing operations starting tomorrow in preparation for the opening of classes next month.

"We will have operations all over Metro Manila as soon as the opening of classes so that the sidewalks would be safe and orderly for our students. We would have operations in areas near schools where there are many vendors and other obstructions on the sidewalks," Fernando told the reporters in a phone interview.

Some areas being targeted for clearing operations are Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City and the University Belt in Manila.

"We will confiscate goods and any obstruction we find on the sidewalk. Anything on the sidewalk is considered contraband," said Fernando.

He said the agency has already informed those who may be affected by the operations.

For the past four years, the MMDA has been implementing sidewalk clearing operations which includes the seizure of sidewalk vendors' wares, plus the removal of structures that occupy the road right-of-way.

MetroBriefs

Death inside a bar

A DRUNKEN Filipino customer was shot dead allegedly shortly after a fight in a bar in Sta. Cruz, Manila shortly after midnight yesterday. Police identified the victim as Tan Ling Ho, 35, of 871 Reed Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila. Senior Inspector (SPO2) Santos Lumabat of the Manila Police District Homicide Section (the incident took place at around 1:20 a.m. at the TOP Royal KTV on Nolasco Mapua Street, Sta. Cruz. Police said the victim was drinking with several other customers when suddenly approached by unidentified assailant while drinking. Ly was declared dead on arrival while his companions identified as Rolly Mercado were treated at Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center for treatment. Cabalfin said.

Rhegine C. Ortiz

QC's flood-prone areas

THE MAYOR-elect Sonny Belmonte of Quezon City is ready to meet the challenge of flood-prone areas. Belmonte identified as priority areas in the city's flood control program the city council, Aurora Boulevard, Kalayaan Avenue, Banawe Street, Kamias Road, Commonwealth Avenue, Tandang Sora, Visayas Avenue and creeks in the city. He also vowed to improve the drainage system. He also announced the establishment of a command center and channels to prevent people from entering flood-prone areas.

Ed Pif

Faster mail delivery

PHILPOST is gearing up to meet the challenges of the fast-changing world of communications. The Philippine Postal Corp. (PhilPost) has purchased 40 brand-new mail vans, Postmaster general Cesario Sotto announced. The vans, which will be used to address the company's fleet of vehicles, would ensure faster delivery of letters and packages throughout the country. "We are confident that the new acquisition of brand-new mail vans will boost our capabilities to better serve the mailing public and attract new international mailers to patronize the services of PhilPost," Sotto said in a statement.

Edu D. Punay

Training for teachers

TEACHERS in elementary level private-operated schools in Malabon City will undergo a three-day training program aimed at updating them on different teaching strategies in order to ensure the quality of instruction in the city. The program, which will run from 20 to 22, is also aimed "to help increase Excellence through Character Transformation." Some of the speakers to be invited during the program were Dr. Gemma Lee Diaz of the Manuel de Manila University, "The Effective Teacher" and Dr. Angelo Salvador of the Philippine Institute of Volunteerism and Initiatives, "Environmental and Social Issues." Dr. Teresita G. Constantino, Director II of the Department of Education-National Capital Region, was also invited to speak. Altogether, opening program of the Malabon Mayor Mr. Lourd De L. Fernandez was the guest of honor.

Homeless no more

EIGHTY families who used to live on the pavement of Roosevelt Avenue in Quezon City can call their own. The Quezon City government has constructed relocation of condominium sites in a new batch of beneficiaries for the homeless housing project within Barangay Bagong Pag-asa. The condominiums, including 20 City Hall employees, will occupy a five-story condominium. Each building is divided in a block area. Each unit has a floor area of 20 sq m. Each unit has a toilet and bath. Residents will be charged a monthly rental fee of P1,000 to P225,000 which can be paid in 25 years through long-term or mortgage payments.

BJ Pig

Boy needs new liver

SEVEN-year-old Reuben Mikael Cortez needs a new liver. Diagnosed with Biliary Atresia, a rare disease characterized by the absence or closure of bile ducts, Reuben's only chance of survival is a liver transplant. Reuben was identified over July 3 2006 but he still needs a new liver. Reuben's parents are appealing to kind-hearted readers for financial and medical help. They may call 981-8400 and 981-8402/8403 or e-mail cjdcortez@yahoo.com. Donations can also be deposited to any Banco de Oro branch under the account of Ramon Mikael I. Cortez, 3301 1291 for Chinabank On Line, 0261008863 (dollar savings).

Mishap leaves 1 dead, 2 hurt

By Elmer C. Tanhee Jr.

A BUSED PASSENGER JEEP WAS OVERTURNED a flyover in Marikina City at around 7 p.m. Monday when driver Manuel Regidor, 51, suddenly lost control of the vehicle and hit at least three bystanders.

Regidor's passengers were unhurt but the bystanders Hanson, 10, who was just attending to some of his errands, was killed. Two others were injured, investigator SPO2 Jesus Pantino said.

Regidor told the police that he had just come from Cubao and was on his way to Marikina. As the jeep was traveling on Bonifacio Avenue, Barangay Tumana, a motorcycle suddenly crossed the street. Regidor said he stepped on the brakes but the jeep kept on moving.

He turned the wheel to the right and the vehicle went up on the sidewalk but it was still moving fast, Regidor said.

He added that he heard the wheel to the right to make a close shave for Sgt. Marcel Bolano, 20, who was crossing the street.

The jeep continued moving as Regidor once again turned the wheel to the right. Thereafter, the vehicle ran over Mateo Bolano, 7, causing another passenger jeep parked on the street.

Ricky Gonzalez, the driver of the other jeep, was also injured.

Regidor's jeep finally stopped after it hit a fire hydrant on the sidewalk.

The three victims were brought to the nearby Rodriguez Medical Center where Mateo died while undergoing treatment.

THE PLACE TO BE With classes set to open just a few days from now, parents, with their children in tow, flock to Divisoria to shop for school supplies. *RAFAEL*

Pope gives hope for quick John Paul sainthood

POPE Benedict XVI in Krakow, Poland, May 27, brought joy to Poles by announcing that his beloved John Paul II will be made a saint "in the not-too-distant future."

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queco

Iran president consolidating power

TEHRAN, IRAN—PRESIDENT MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD is trying to consolidate power in the office of the presidency in a way never before seen in the 27-year history of the Islamic Republic, apparently with the tacit approval of Iran's supreme leader, according to government officials and political analysts here.

That rare unity of elected and religious leadership at the highest levels offers the United States an opportunity to talk to a government, however combative, that has often spoken with unflattering voices of many purposes.

But if the United States, which severed relations with Iran after the 1979 revolution, opened such a dialogue, it would boost the prestige of the Iranian president, who has packed rooted conservatives with the Shiite clerical establishment and people close to the government have run their Ahmadinejad and his allies are trying to buttress a system of conservative clerical rule that has lost credibility with the public. Their thinking: Anyone we bring to visit cannot draw the Shiite clerical system and the supreme leader is supporting him."

The changing nature of Iran's domestic political landscape has potentially far-reaching implications for the United States. While Iran has adopted a confrontational approach toward the West, it has also signaled—however cleanly—a desire to consult solutions. Though the content of Ahmadinejad's letter to President Bush was widely mocked here and in Washington for its religious focus and preachy tone, it played well in Iran's rural countryside—religious bastion. Analysts here said that it represented both Ahmadinejad's independent and his position as a messenger for the system, and that the very act of reaching out was significant.

"If the US had relations with Iran under the reformist government, it could not have been a complete relationship," said Akbar Alami, a retired general and the first reformist-leaned and former deputy defense minister, referring to the calmer tenure of former President Mohammad Khatami. "But if there are to be a detente now, for sense the whole country's behind relations with the West."

AFP

ST. PETERSBURG'S 300TH YEAR

Russian girls in costumes parades along a St. Petersburg street during a carnival to mark the city's 300th birthday, May 27.

AP

With illegals engaged to fight wildfires, US West faces dilemma

By Kirk Johnson

SALEM, ORE.—THE DEBATE over immigration, which has hit hard into almost every corner of American life in recent months, is now sweeping through the woods and the implications could be immense for the coming fire season in the West.

At some or half of the roughly 3,000 private firefighters hired in the Pacific Northwest and contracted by state and federal governments to fight forest fires are immigrants, mostly from Mexico. And many of them are working here illegally.

A recent report by the inspector general for the US Forest Service said illegal immigrants had been fighting fires for several years. The Forest Service said in response that it would work with immigration and customs enforcement officers and the Social Security administration to improve the process of identifying violators.

Oregon, which administers private fire contracts for the Forest Service, has imposed tougher rules on companies that employ firefighters, including a requirement that firefighting crews leaders have a working command of English and a formal business license unless crews' members are assembly.

Some Hispanic contractors say the changes could cause many immigrants to stay away from the jobs. Others forestry workers say that firefighting was simply too too important—and too difficult to screen other applicants—to allow for a crackdown on illegal workers.

"I don't think it's in anybody's interest, including the Forest Service, to enforce immigration—they're [something from it," said Shawn Hoschek, owner of Mt Forestry in Medford, Ore., which fields two 20-person fire crews.

The private contract crews can be dispatched through the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, to anywhere in the country where they get low-lay or less expense for local entities to handle.

The work, which pays $10 to $15 an hour, is demanding and dangerous. A week-week fighting a big fire can go 100 hours.

The plight of the fire companies underscores the surprising dependence that the debate over immigration can lead. Her government-against bilingualism to ensure everyone on a fire line can understand one another, while threatening to scare away needed workers.

Jacinto Garcia, who came from Mexico in the '80s and started a fire company in Salem in 2001, said the new rules could scare him. Not only is he likely to lose workers, but some industry officials suggest that larger fire companies, which tend to be owned by non-Hispanics, could erode smaller competitors like Garcia, using immigration and safety concerns as a smokescreen. AFP

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HAYDEN

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SPORTS
Editor Teddyric S. Melendres

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Strange goes wire-to-wire; Pagunsan 6th

By Manny R. Castillo

EMPHATIC.

WITH HIS PUNISHING DRIVE UNABLE TO KEEP up, Australia's Scott Strange pulled away to a five-stroke win yesterday even as Justo Pagunsan came back from a third-round meltdown to emerge as the top Filipino in the 90th Philippine Open at Mimosa Golf & Country Club.

The 29-year-old from Perth capped his wire-to-wire romp with a 2-under par 70 for a 280-to-tal that crowned him with the largest margin of victory in the Asian Tour this year.

"I had a birdie on the first and that dictated my day and the partners dropped out [of the front]," said Strange, whose second career Asian Tour win, worth $30,700, boosted him to the top 10 of the Order of Merit with $149,929 in earnings.

"It was pretty embarrassing the weather and all," added Strange. "But it was worth it."

"WELL WORTH IT": Australian Scott Strange shows his champion's trophy

Norman youngster Hah Jun-won rallied from 16th place with the day's best round of 67 in the famed East course and took second place at 285.

Taiwan's Lu Hsi-hao shot a 71 and tied for third place with compatriot Yeh Chung-ting (71) and England's Chris Hodgett (72) at 286.

Pure cane Pagunsan, a two-time runner-up in this event when he was the country's top amateur, bi-cloned out with scor 72 to wind up in a tie for sixth at 288 with Australian Usho Park (72). They won $6,300 each (about P10,000).

Pagunsan, the winner of the The Country Club tournament early this year on his pro debut, came within two strokes of Strange in the third round but dropped five strokes in the last three holes and fell out of contention with a 74.

Tied for third after the final round, Cookie Lofi wound up in a deadlock for eighth after carding a 75 for 289, along with Jasmin Gary Sangkapo (72) and Jason Dawo (70).

Gerald Emsden, the 2000 champion at Bolton and second placer last year, submitted a 71 and shared 12th spot with IGP Chanwanna (72) of India and Adam Porter (74) of Australia with 290 tallies. They won $5,376 each.

Angelo Que bolstered his final round 76 for 292, in a tie with another notable, 2002 winner Rich Gibson, who fired a 75.

"I'll absolutely be back and defend in January," said Strange, whose Asian Tour breakthrough wins came in last year's Mymensor Open.

He had earlier rounds of 68-70-72.

Strange removed four strokes in his first 14 holes and bogeys on the 15th and 17th did little to slow him down.

The tournament will be the Asian Tour's kickoff leg next year with the purse to be increased to $500,000. Peach Vitch will remain as host until 2008.

Strange became the second straight Australian winner of the event after Adam Le Vincenzo, who prevailed at Mount Malarayat last year. Le Vincenzo fired a 71 and finished tied for 15th spot at 291.

Marvin Dumandan overcame amateur horrors, firing a 74 for 294 to finish four up on Jay Bayron (79). Michael Bibat wound up third at 301 after a 75.

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XTRA

Filipinos buck Torre defeat to down Ecuadorans

By Ray Lubeto

TIRUS, SPAIN — THE PHILIPPINES STRUCK on the losers' boards Saturday to mystery Ecuador, 3-1, and got back on track in the 37th Chess Olympiad in the Olympic Village here.

Two-time national champion Ronnie Lapiz and Pedo Rhaziwa Oliver Olivarez and Wilfredo Ivey Jr. won their games on boards 2, 3 and 4, respectively, to compensate for the loss of Grandmaster Eugene Torre on board 1.

The Filipino, winner's no lucky boomers, as they loosed to the Indonesians, 2.5-1.5, and would score in the dismal Pride.

Handling rookie Jeremiah Lapiz beat International Master United Melito in 47 moves of a Gelfe System Opening while former Le Salle star Benedicto Ambi handled black to down Miguel Medina in 41 moves of a Nick.

The 72-year-old Ilo, an oncoming high school freshman at St. Francis School, finished off the Ecuadorians by knocking IM Pilmo Bueno in 66 moves of a Modern Defense.

Three second victory against three draws and a loss has to the United States (3.5-1.5) gave the 20th-seeded Filipinos 14.5 points, good for a share of 20th-19th places in the men's division now led by Armenia with 18.

Top favorite Russia fell to third with 17 points after absorbing a 2.5-1.5 beating from the Netherlands it revised 6.

"Nowhere wins and we'll be in a good position," said team's skipper Sammy Eastos.

That won't be easy though, as the Filipinos are slated to face the ARMENIAN Republic, ranked 47th, 2nd round 57 on Sunday.

Eastos will be fielding GM Mark Paragua

Round standings:
MEN: 10—Armenia; 17.5—Netherlands; 17—Russia, Ukraine; 16.5—Ukraine, United States; 16—Israel, Poland, Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Iceland, Serbia, France, Israel; 15.5—Bulgaria, Denmark, Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan; 15—Germany, Ireland, Croatia, England, Romania, Peru, Greece, Switzerland, Philippines, Malaysia.
WOMEN: 19.5—China; 14—Georgia; 13—Ukraine, United States, India, Bulgaria; 12.5—Estonia, Hungary; 12—Netherlands, Georgia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine; 11.5—Belarus, Latvia, Russia; 11—Poland, Philippines, Finland, Slovenia, Malaysia, Peru, Italy.

on board 1, GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. on board 2, Lapiz on board 3 and Oliveros on board 4.

Torre, who yielded to GM Carlos Franco Maximiano in 36 moves of an English Opening, will take a rest along with Ilo, who has two wins and two draws thus far.

The 22-year-old Paragua used half an hour's stronger against his opponent. GM Ramiro Hillo Bedimenes, who fainted before their fans meeting when he was about 10 years old.

Antonio will handle black against highly rated GM Johnson Hipolumnus Elio (2670) while Lapiz meets GM Ricardo Dantchara Hamilton, who totes three points on three wins and one loss like Lapiz, handler GM Theodore Theobaldos.

Against 2000-ranked Finland, women's team captain Cesar Caturda will be fielding WIM Shorbe Joy Lumbres, WIMs Catherine Perena and Jan-Jan Jacobo on board 4.

Lumbres will be pitted against WIM Nino Sammalvuo and fielding against WIM Tanja Rantanen.

Bersilia, a senior Sports Science student of the University of the Philippines, landed in Barcelona last week while WIM Noemi Rhodora bound to WIM Tatiana Roberts as the Filipinas dropped to a share of 30th-34th places.

Ura rescued the Filipinas from a shutout by downing rookie WIM Sanna Bhavnani.

National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Atty. Prospero "Butch" Pichay is supposed to arrive in the Olympic Village Saturday afternoon to boost the morale of the Philippine teams.

Thai shuttlers just too tough for Asuncions

Top RP pair settles for 2nd

By Mary Anthony Reyes

SMASHED TO PIECES

That was how Thailand ended the country's badminton aspirations in the mixed doubles final of the Binga Bonanza Philippine Open championships yesterday at the Philsports.

The world No. 11 pair of Sudket Prapakamol and Saralee Thungthongkam unleashed their fierce furies to shed the women's pride, Jeremyrose Lapis and Jeremyrose Antonino, 2- 23 11, 21-15 decision last night to take the top mixed doubles purse of $7,500.

The Thais kept the shuttlecock low then hammered it at every opportunity as would the Filipinos' inexperienced hid for the title in the four-star tourney.

Malaysian Hafiz Hashim, the world's No. 11, kept his brother, Bodin, at bay to secure a 23 11, 21- 7 win in their men's singles showdown and clinch the biggest purse of the tournament worth $6,000.

Anna Sirkmol of Indian, only 16, the island off world No. 66 Pee Kim Julia Wong of Malaysia, 23-13, 22-20, to top many with the women's singles title.

Grandmaster Hong Kong shoulders Alberto Narito and Yahoo Buddhasena Whitehorn whipped up on ranking upset winners over world 26 Theodore Constantine and John Ritzell of Indonesia, 15-21, 21-15, 21-16, for the men's doubles title.

The all-Indonesian women's doubles went to world No. 25 Kristyn Fehl and Jo Wanita, who downed Rita Sugiarto Endang and Yanti Mamahaut, 21-16, 21-13, in the event sponsored by AFC, PLDT and Smart.

The Americans, whose best finish in an international event was a bronze medal in the 2002 Southeast Asian Games in Montana, kept the match close but the Thais were straight losers.

"We made a lot of errors but that's how the game is," said the 20-year-old Fernie, adding that it was their best performance in the three times they hosted in the Thai pair.

"We are just happy to play in front of our countrymen, they're fans very supportive," said Sirkmol.

The Thais nearly kept the lead low and put the heats on the defenders early on through Prapakamol's booming smashes.

The Americans, who are expected to name up the world ranking within the top-seeding at 600 game sprinter unlisted entry in the first set alone and could only make two winners thereafter set.

Thungthongkam and Prapakamol served three straight returns as the Americans ran within 15-13 but Fernie missed two kills on game set-he set.

The could tone 14-all in the second when Prapakamol whipped up another of his powerful smashes to touch off the fiery winning which ended with a kill that went past the outstretched forearm of a match point.

The Filipinos had earlier handled two-time Indonesian tandems, including Sydney Olympic silver winner Tri Kushardjanto and Minarti Timur in the semifinals.

[MIRACLE] Thungthongkam lunges for the feather with partner Sudket Prapakamol (right) in their match against the Asuncion siblings.

The son also rises

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Diego

THE RECENT appointment by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of sportsman Arnold "Jil" Aleman as Presidential Assistant on South-east Sports is a welcome move.

With his youth and energy reputation cigarette smoke chief of the Manila Sports Council since 2002, put to rescue his passion for sports, the 33-year-old Ala always someone of public-and inspiration to our national athletes. A resident of Manila, he is a young man going places who could easily succeed as the legacy of his popular father Mayor Jim Aleman.

All because the Asian Junior Championships on in 1994 when he was only 23. As 2001 in the age of 28, he was named Manila Sports Council chief, becoming the youngest ever to appointed to the position. Because of the company's pioneer day Boxing Series, Manila successfully hosted the annual under-17 Manila Youth Games, the MY National Invitational and the most-attended Manila Marathon.

On the Manila Sports Council, Ali said the thrust of the Mayor program is to look for young stars but highly motivated athletes from the grassroots and polish their skills and eventually transform them into world-class athletes. "This program has paid off because within a year's time our athletes have dominated the Palarong Pambansa (NSG) in four consecutive years, Mayor has produced junior world and international champions."

Ali also noted that his many detractors, most of those who gained prominence in the sporting scene came from families that had the means to support their thousand and 6-gained results. "Hardly could you see a young man or woman coming from the grassroots become champion athletes, except in few cases where some were lucky enough to catch the attention of generous sponsors."

"We want to change all of this. There are the engines that bring sport going."

* * *

HALLMARK OF CONTACT SPORTS: Who is to blame when athletes suffer injuries in contact sports such as soccer, boxing, American football, and basketball? Is it the referee? Is it the coach? Is it the sport's governing body? Is it the athlete himself? No one or to blame.

According to a recent court decision, athletes assumed the risk of injury whenever they took part in sports, particularly in contact sports. Anyone participating in contact sports must be aware of the risk and accept some of the contacts to be hard on the head and body fitness, sprains, broken bones, concussions—even deaths—have been known to occur.

In an article in the London-based Sunday Telegraph Review, Dr. James Le Fanu said the modern athlete is vulnerable to a host of ailments. Some pitfalls during the athletic medicine death and a bewildering variety of acute injuries to bones and muscles.

* * *

PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES: My family and I extend our deepest condolences to Gilbert Nite, a teammate of my son Mateo at the Spring Cooking Of basketball team, on the demise of his father, Godfather Gavin Nite, who passed away at the age of 72 this day of 5th. The family lies at the family residence in Ayala-Alabang, General Luis St., Muntinlupa Heights, Bonifacio, Quezon City.

Soccer: Look who's betraying the Filipino youth

YOU CAN'T HELP BUT MARVEL SOMEtimes! Schaff, the Ambassador of Argentina to the Philippines.

The purely ebullient father Schaff is a consummate diplomat who doesn't bestow schadenfreude.

He's particularly alarmed whenever he sees something wrong going on.

He also happens to be the honest, dedicated sportsman out to spread the gospel of even development through games, namely football.

Himself fill of life, Schaff, of German descent, did not hesitate to manifest his great concern on his mission in the Philippines but not been enjoying all the good times and pleasures available to all nations of the world through the game of soccer.

* * *

With the glowing look of things in playgrounds around Metro Manila, a shifting sports how would readily suppose that football doesn't exist in the country.

On to put it more bluntly, the universal game that's embraced and followed passionately by the religion by practically all nations on the planet but yet to be executed and introduced here.

How can that be? Schaff wondered important.

This was last Thursday at the exquisite Cafe Ysabel on the tree-lined side of P. Guevarra in San Juan, not too

BARE EYE

Rico Navarro

far from the old Hanson residence.

He see, with his solid build and firm face, it's hard to imagine the ambassador thinking hours.

* * *

But you couldn't for the sure he got so he noted, as their dribbled the continuing death of football in the Philippines.

He rued the waste of talent and unsupped potential.

He recalled fond times during the local travels by officers of AFS Intercultural's Inter-Whites and Hearts, headed by Dr. Raul Reyes, of a few of the Julia spoke from Argentina.

The affair, a round-out, grassroots-style, of an extended affair an Argentine national who when there's roaming all over that country.

The very Ambassador Schaff would've plum, his counterpart are already setting up for the forthcoming international sports games were punished. Especially the World Cup, the spectacular football championship to be played in Germany next month.

* * *

Brazil is the defending champion, Germany a strong favorite, but Argentina could be considered a dark horse.

"Well, we happen to have won the olympic soccer gold in Athens in 2004," Schaff reminded with a naughty wink.

Of course, what many Filipino sports fans had not overlooked was that the Argentine national basketball team led by Manu Ginobili also won the gold medal in the Athens Olympics.

Anyway, Ambassador Schaff organized rally has been grinding over the status of football in the Philippines. If there's one people in Asia that's perfect, it fit to play and excel in soccer, it's the Filipino.

But, he muses, the Filipino has the build, the grace, the quickness, native gifts that have made countries like Brazil and Argentina multi-renowned powers in the continental game of soccer.

* * *

Searching for a solution to the puzzle, the good ambassador could only shake his head in disbelief.

Why soccer is a game perfect for Filipinos, he repeated.

No need to explain the fact that, unlike in basketball where short limited native types find be match for the six-to-seven, 2m goal is just there at ground level, always within reach, for the Filipino campaigner.

* * *

Why, why, why?

So, Ambassador Schaff did not want to condemn.

But he said something must be done to correct the sordid situation.

The government must is to the point of the limit, to all sports-loving citizens.

* * *

In a way, Schaff wasn't so unlike his countrymen.

"I know your football officials are getting big money from Fifa, the world football body, every year," Schaff hinted.

He did not say how much, but the annual amount received by notable Filipino officials—the names Batmanlilet and Abad came to him—must have astonished his fellows.

He say notable football officials become crass their self-aggrandizement and embarrassment they have initiated the book.

There's practically no sign that something is being spent to revive soccer here.

An investigation appears in order.

Now, if the top officials of the Philippine Football Federation would at least bother to buy a soffit for the sport they've helped kill, something may yet happen to soccer in the Philippines.

Sorry, but your this always generous, me-thanks-for-nothing attitude, would not qualify as guilt-bearer.

Long shot takes Cojuangco Cup

By Manong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, CAVITE — IT IS LONG ODDS solution favors were upset it area.

And in the unconventional of odds-makers, it's not the first time that Cojuangco presided at the kick-off race of the year's Triple Crown series at the San Lazaro Leisure Park here yesterday.

Geared sensibly by Ronald Baldonado, the fourth-ranked Don Cleopad came with a finishing kick that was just enough to hold off a charging field and claim the Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. Cup.

Don Cleopad, who stalked the pacesetting and hotting favorite Million Dollar early, finished by half a length ahead of Special Athlete, who in turn raced out Jet Dalton. Tigers In Action ends/was then a length behind Jet Dalton for fourth. Setting Yellow settled for fifth.

The nine, worth P1.2 million, was the feature for the Stretch Mesh race of Bulo Sprague property and it already established Don Cleopad as the horse to beat for the remainder of the series.

"It's (Don Cleopad) was a gallant race," said owner Patricia Cojuangco, who teamed the horse after his late father. "Surely he proved himself worthy one with a lot of heart."

Don Cleopad, who won the second leg of the Road to Triple Crown series in the same come-from-behind manner last month, turned in quarter-clockings of 24", 23", 23, 23 for a 1 minute 49 second dashing over the mile.

A natural stayer, the chestnut Don Cleopad now advances into the eligible by Dad Derby, to be held on Million Dollar, the only speedball in the field, set a comfortable pace around the mid-backstretch.

Baldonado waited room when the field hit the last bend and, after dispatching Roaring Silver and Million Dollar, Don Cleopad held on with typical tailless charging from the outside.

The race was wide open this Million Dollar, the favorite, was only slide favorite P202, 210 out of the total pool of P466, 205. Don Cleopad sold P80,995.

NCA int'l cockfest today

THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE SYDNEY CONTINENTAL CUP cockfighting tilt with cocks from the United States, Canada, Australia and Malaysia in the NCA International Cock Derby at the Bulacan Bridge Cockpit in Pandacan City. The festival more than 15 world and host fights starts at 4 p.m. The three-day weekend derby is sponsored by Sydney Continental Group Mikemelido. Today is the culmination of activities in honor of Sydney Cup Cock Derby. For inquiries, call 89-13-2191, 813- 9028 or 810-5691.

Anniversary derby June 7

THE BULLSPORTS AND LEISURE MART CORP. (BPLM) are accomplishing anti-other sports events at Bulacan Bridge Cockpit in Pandacan City on the occasion of its 1st anniversary. The anniversary derby is set on Derby Day, June 7. To be sponsored by the Mega Derby Run, this derby features a guaranteed prize of P1 million. Entry fee is P15,000. The PCC promoters Lito Delfino, Rudy Dakol and Wilbert Co request to see you at their office at the Bulacan Bridge Cockpit.

SPORTSWATCH

Boxing: All fights for the derby, Mandaluyong, parkway, 1 p.m. elimination of the Boy Abunda will start 1 p.m. tomorrow. This Saturday at the same venue will start 1 p.m. tomorrow. This Saturday at the same venue will start 1 p.m. tomorrow. This Saturday at the same venue

Wade waxes hot, again

Heat take 2-1 lead

MIAMI—DWYANE WADE SCORED 32 POINTS AND FUELED A game-ending run as Miami beat Detroit 98-93 Saturday to take the lead in the National Basketball Association Eastern Conference finals.

Shaquille O'Neal collected 27 points and 12 rebounds for the host, who took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series and are halfway to sweeping a seven-game loss in Detroit action years's postseason finale.

The Heat can put the Pistons on the brink of elimination Monday, when they host Game 4.

Meanwhile, the Pistons have play the Dallas Mavericks at home in Game 3 of their next series Sunday.

The Pistons arose and after the first three minutes of the contest but opened the fourth quarter with an 11-0 run to draw within 74-73 on back-to-back three-pointers by Chauncey Billups with 7:41 left.

Miami coach Pat Riley called a timeout and his star superstar promptly delivered interactive line-backer to teammates.

Wade drove to the rim and converted a difficult three-point play to begin the 20-10 burst and O'Neal added a bank shot to the lane for a 79-73 lead.

"They put the ball in my hands and trust me to make the right play," said Wade. "My teammates stepped on me. Guys look at me and say 'It's your time.' That's all you need."

Richard Hamilton made four free throws to bring Detroit within 79-77, but Wade answered with two fast shots and his take Wade.

HEAT'S Shaquille O'Neal walks in to score Dale Davis of Detroit. AFP

Coca-Cola Tigers gain q'finals, thwart Air21

By Jane Navarro

COCA-COLA REFUSED TO BE RATTLED BY Air21's stingy-ball-control trap to secure a convincing 87-75 win and a quarterfinal berth in the Gov. Mariano PBA Philippine Cup last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Ali Peek garnered his way to 20 points while Gerard Francisco and Billy Mamaril contributed key rainouts to lead the Tigers to the quarterfinals for the first time after finishing dead last the past two conferences.

"Everybody gave everything they had to every person for our matching confidence," said Coca-Cola coach Bobby Stevs, whose Tigers will face the fourth-seeded Alaska Aces in a best-of-five quarterfinal series after the eliminated phase.

Bill Antonio was supposed to put a body on the Smiley Nino Canaleta but rode the bench throughout because of a sprained left ankle. Francisco gladly picked up the cudgels for the ailing mentor.

Mamaril's timely incursions, highlighted by a three-point play off Barry Dr. Ocampo, turned the momentum back to the Tigers, who saw a 11-point lead erased to 56-53 in the third.

But Peek slammed five points in the opening minutes of the fourth to pull the Coca-Cola rush to 72-65, before Francisco drilled in a couple of long range bombs to settle the issue.

The scores:

COCA-COLA 87—Peek 20, Garcia 17, Mamaril 11, Francisco 9, Ilustre 8, Dikitis 8, Ong 6, Mercedes 5, Mariano 4, Magsaysay 3, Capati 2.

AIR21 75—Dionisio 19, Pablo 13, Alfonso 12, Dr. Ocampo 11, Yu 10, De Guzman 10, Lastimosa 5, Sison 3, Daniel 2, Fernando 0, Ong 0.

Quarters: 29-25, 48-38, 62-62, 87-75.

Federer starts Paris challenge

PARIS—TOP SEED ROGER FEDERER STARTS his French Open quest on Sunday with a first round match against qualifier Diego Hartfield of Argentina.

The Swiss was supposed to play Frenchman Arnaud Clement but the world No. 56 pulled out on Friday with a groin injury.

Federer is aiming to become only the sixth man to win all four grand slams in a career.

The world No. 1 is following his recent court by his female counterpart, Amelie Mauresmo, who plays American Meghann Shaughnessy.

Fourth-seeded Russian Maria Sharapova, who arrived in Paris very short of match practice, faces another American in Mashona Washington.

Hamburg Masters Series winner Tommy Robredo takes on Czech Tomas Zib and third seed David Nalbandian faces Antonio Wawrinka. AP

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Gorres outclasses Colombian rival

BLUNTED IN PINOY "THE IRISH" GORRES, fighting for the second time under Team Ora-Hugo's Golden Boy Promotions, smacked Colombian Pedro Rios on Miranda yesterday in their 10-round fight at the Metro Depot Center in Carson City, California. The bout was in the undercard of the WBO featherweight championship title bout between Mexican and challenger Fernando Montiel. Gorres (29-1-1, 12 KOs), hailed at the CPSD team Sportsphere, outmanued Miranda (16-11-2, 10 KOs), knocking down the Colombian in rounds one, five and 10. All three judges awarded Gorres the win, who exhibited his stamina as the WBO's No. 3 jr. ranked fighter. **Gabriel L. Caperoling, contributor**

ETHIER Read our Horoscope is the Dutch's main weapon.

Dutch battlecry lives on

AMSTERDAM—THE NETHERLANDS WILL head to the World Cup next month with a simple mantra hammered into them by their opponent time: "Don't lose to Germany."

Half a century after the end of World War II and the German occupation, lingering Dutch resentment of their giant neighbour to the east often bubbles to the surface when the two countries meet on a football field.

And Dutch fans are already contemplating the possibility of an emphatic quarterfinal meeting against the hosts in Berlin on June 30.

"You just don't want to lose to Germans. The worst case scenario is that Germany wins this World Cup," football fan Joris Germans said.

Whether its bitterness over World War II or the enduring heartache of Holland's defeat in the 1974 World Cup final, playing Germany makes the Dutch behave quite strangely.

Former Dutch international Ronald Koeman advocated using a German player's shirt as a dart paper in 1988. Two years later, soft spoken Frank Rijkaard, now the coach of Barcelona, spat at German striker Rudi Voeller.

For the World Cup, Dutch fans can don bright orange replicas of the German World War II army helmet and wear them on the German flag courtesy of a special dummy. AFP

Pole-sitter Schumacher sent to back of the grid

MONTE CARLO, MONACO—MICHAEL Schumacher was stripped of pole position at the Monaco Grand Prix after stewards ruled he deliberately stopped his car on the circuit during Saturday's qualifying.

The seven-time world champion will start from the back of the grid in Sunday's race, while Fernando Alonso will start from pole with Mark Webber of Williams moving up to second.

After setting the fastest lap of 1 minute, 13.898 seconds early in the final session of qualifying, Schumacher appeared to lose control of his Ferrari on his final lap and walked out on the track on the final turn.

Others, including defending world champion Alonso, were behind him trying to set a fastest lap.

Alonso had looked like he was about to do it, but had to slow down and avoid Schumacher's car.

While Schumacher was still reacting to the second shooting him for putting the position, the stewards announced they had launched an investigation into the incident. Schumacher was called in to explain his actions.

"(There was) no justifiable reason (to stop) with such similar occasion and unusual pressure at this part of the circuit..." the stewards ruling said.

Following the session after the session ended and after viewing evidence and competing data, the stewards ruled that it was a driving infringement and demoted all the times from the qualifying.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE Monday, May 29, 2006

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SPORTS

Taiwan spikers soar

STANDINGS	W	L
China	5	0
Chinese Taipei	4	1
Kazakhstan	3	2
Thailand	2	3
Japan	1	3
Philippines	1	3
Indonesia	0	4

GAMES TOMORROW
(First Tiebreaker)
(3 p.m.— Alexandria, Setsuko Sprinter Center vs Satoshi Indonesia)
4 p.m.— Asad (PH) vs Sasaki (Indonesia) (Chen)
6 p.m.— Kajiwara-Shimizu vs Kang-Chen (Thailand)

By Jasmine W. Payo

CHINESE TAIPEI'S EXPERIMENT ALMOST backfired on the Taiwanese struggled in the early going before slipping past Indonesia, 25-27, 25-17, 25-14, 25-19, in the 2006 Asian Women's Club volleyball championship yesterday at the Hotel Coliseum.

"Our players' attitude and strength were not good," said coach Huang Hung Lin, who insisted the Taiwanese to accumulate enough points for today's game, so allowed everybody to play it was not our normal strategy."

Lin Ching-yi powered Chinese Taipei to its fourth win in five games with a match-high 15 points highlighted by eight kills and six aces.

In the second match, Thailand thoroughly outplayed a surprisingly sluggish Japan squad, 25-9, 25-16, 25-23, to escalate tied at 2-2.

In the nightcap, defending champion China streaked to its fifth straight set victory with a 25-13, 25-16, 25-13 decision over Kazakhstan.

"We expect to win our last two games," said Thai coach Chanthawan Amtrakat. "We are lucky to win because Japan didn't play well."

Yenny Legiarta Sangkaningtyas Pambudi delivered 12 of Thailand's 42 kills, while Japan could only answer with a measly 19.

Chinese Taipei returned to its dominating form by opening the third set with seven straight points, including three aces from Lin, 7-1.

Indonesia tried to remain in the game when Rahayu Ratih Puspita served a match point, but a Lin spike closed out the match.

Indonesia saved two match points in the fourth, rallying behind Meiyo Indriasari to draw to at 24-23 after trailing at 20-13. But an error allowed Chinese Taipei to claim the opener.

Sabal halts B'navista streak at 2; Manipol also rules

THE NEW BALANCE POWER RACE 2006 YESterday at the Northside Global City saw the changing of the guard in Philippine endurance running.

Two-time Olympian Eduardo Buenavista's streak of two Power Race titles ended as reigning Milo Marathon champion Crescencio Sabal stole the spotlight from his friend and rival.

Sabal, who hails from Salcon Toukson just like Buenavista, pulled away four kilometers into the 21K race and never looked back. He finished in a record time of 1 hour, 21 minutes and 9 seconds.

"Buenavista just came from SMT [basic military training] and that's probably the reason why I won him," said the 27-year-old Cebuano Filipino.

Sabal, also a member of the Philippine Army base Marathon kit, is now for the 5th time.

Cristabel Manoy, the 2005 Southeast Asian marathon queen, was also dethroned by MAO M.SM women winner Mercedita Manipol.

The 28-year-old Manipol, who competed in the 25K race for the first time, said Manoy was already probably out of shape, having gone through the same SMT training as Buenavista.

Buenavista settled for second place at 1:23:30. Placing third was veteran Bernardo Bonanno, who clocked 1:25:25. In the race supported by Planet Sports, The Athletes Foce, Air Sirra Zealand, Asia 66.3, Men's Health Magazine, Xtreme Print, Tokyo Tokyo, Body, Multiplan, Runco the Cure, Citibank, Securities Clerk International, Visit Montal Vitaco, Powerade, Hotz, Atlanta 99, and Powerbar.

Manipol clocked 1:37:36, easily beating Marian, the 2005 Milo Marathon champ, who came in a 1:43:12. Rowena Hanapog of Davao was third in 1:43:55.

The Sabal brothers also made yesterday's New Balance Power Race a family affair as 24-year-old Elmer placed third in the 10K race and the 28-year-old Cresil finished second in the 5K run.

The Tolentino sisters of Cagayan de Oro also won honor big winners as 19-year-old Aileen topped the 10K race and 22-year-old Ellen ruled the 5K run. Placing second and third, respectively, in the women's 5K run were Jhanna and Jenira Maala, respectively.

Capturing the men's crown in the 10K race was former marathon king Allan Balleste. Placing second was Silky Quiney.

The men's 5K race was ruled by Ben Alejandro and placing third was Jeremy Rasala. Alejandro and Rasala helped University of Santo Tomas take the inter-collegiate race trophy.

Placing second in the 5K intercollegiate race was La Salle led by Ney Cruz and Mark Villadas.

CHEERLEADER Sabal crosses the finish unchallenged, winning by more than 4 minutes.

Iloilo Warriors scuttle Laguna

ILOILO CITY— THE ILOILO PROVINCIAL FLYERS third conference just kept enough to win the visiting Laguna Go Kata Pilipinas, 103-97, Friday night in the 2006 Governor Brady-MBC national basketball championship at the University of San Agustin gymnasium. It was the narrowest victory in pulled game in the conference after the 110-94 setback suffered by the Pilipinas at the hands of The Pampanga Dime of Jesus last all seasons with 24 points. Two others scored in double figures in the Warriors, who posted only their second win in six games. French Ruaz added 19 points, Edwin Isaac 15, while Rod Ildefonso Loreto Bautista and Floyd Travis added 12 each for Iloilo. The Pilipinas of Gov. Teresita "Tingting" Lazaro and Mayor Jose Espinosa absorbed their 10th straight loss.

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

How Cherry Pie spent her birthday

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

I'M A FAN OF DITSI CARVELLANO'S," award-winning actress Cherry Pie Picache says of the acclaimed documentarian behind "Minsan Lang Sila Bata" and "Batas."

The first movie is about child labor; the latter, about juvenile justice. Both causes that are especially close to Cherry Pie's heart.

The actress once chaired a fund-raising committee of the diet conditions in local prisons where children, some only 8 years old, are thrown in with hardened criminals.

"I first heard about juvenile justice from public advocates—I'm against the death penalty," Cherry Pie says, "I don't own it in exception but my 4-year-old son insists. That's why I became zealously involved with the plight of children in the penal system. I work closely with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Philippine Action for Youth Offenders (Payo)."

She lends their cash other non-governmental organizations for their work that resulted in the passage last week of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, or RA 9344.

"Now there kids are no longer called criminals or youth offenders, but Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL)," Cherry Pie clarifies.

Sen. Rudy Ejercito of Payo: "The law was championed by Sen. Francis Pangilinan. I consumed Cherry Pie's efforts because she helps the public, through the media, become more aware of the problem."

"I don't usually talk about my advocacy work," Cherry Pie points out. "But I made an exception with CICL because I want more people to take it up. When I discussed this at the press conference of my latest movie 'Batas Ko,' I was surprised to learn that some reporters didn't even know about it.

Cherry Pie plans to set up her own foundation, in collaboration with the 21 or so NGOs already campaigning for juvenile justice.

She celebrated her birthday on May 27 with the children in Cradle, at Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan. "As a jump-off point. For the foundation I "Cradle is a successful CICL center and the

'I don't usually talk about my advocacy work, but this is different; I'd really like more people to take it up'

MORE ON A2

Gary V's 'Relevance'

By Nini Valera

HOW DOES GARY VALENCIANO stay relevant 20 years after he hit the concert stage and counted monster hits?

Neisle Laghanoza, MTV Philippines director for talent/artist relations, credits Gary V's "creativity, dedication and passion for music."

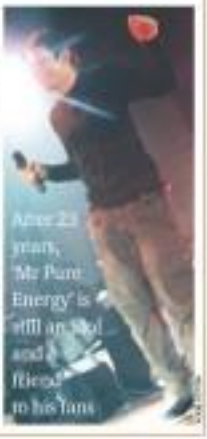
Laghanoza explained: "It's all the things that he does, taken together, that make him unique. There's also his desire to constantly create something new, something totally different."

To his generation, Gary V has become an icon. To his generation's children, who see in the process of discovering him, Gary V is an awesome pop persona. To the latter group belongs Gary's son Gab, 17.

"My Dad's loser is with the youth," Gab said. "The reason he continues to be relevant is that people are like, 'I wonder do what he does,' so people what he's been, I wonder he as great as he is." He's a good role model—so an artist performer as well as a person."

To the audience who watched Gary perform live on Friday at an SM theater to launch his latest album, aptly titled "Relevance," the singer is as much of a talent as he is as idol.

Hours after the show ended, Gary was still signing autographs and chatting with



MORE A21

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MONDAY, MAY 29, 2006

POLITROT — BY BILL SPEED

A. LUPIN — BY JED ALBERA

HAGAR DAN — BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY — BY NYN JUNIOR

BIG BY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

HUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

ATOMIC AND NEBBY — BY LYNN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY Your to-track and reconsider, but also somewhat unlikely traditional. You could to make the world a better place. You're intelligent, you express yourself well, and are a natural leader. Sometimes you can be rather aloof. You may even be a bit opinionated. Others may describe you as headstrong, stubborn, and even a bit pushy. Actually, you're just aware of your own abilities and you're not afraid to let others know it. Birthdate of: Julius Kennedy, 35th U.S. president; Annette Bening, actress; Melissa Etheridge, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): Starting this week, you'll be able to find creative solutions to your problems. You want to buy beautiful things for yourself and loved ones. Your ability to save money can get a boost as well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today, the Venus transit to your sign. This makes you look and feel more attractive. All your relationships will be friendlier in the next few weeks.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Mercury is favorable for communications and pleases you in the next few weeks. Try to squeeze in some good times with the one. It will reinvest you mentally.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Enjoy artistic, social encounters with friends and groups in the next month. The next few weeks is one of the best times for any kind of group activity with friends and colleagues.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Very favorable cosmic influences will come soon to help you in business and your professionalism, let your feelings with bosses, VIPs and parents will impress in the next month.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You appreciation of beauty is heightened now and for the next few weeks. Visit galleries, museums, parks and art exhibits. Talk to others about philosophical and religious ideas.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 23): Gifts and goodies can come your way during the next several weeks. You have an advantage when dealing with others. Your positive insight will be known. You enhance wealth for give you a gift!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 21): Today, travel issues opposite your sign, others treat you for the best. Move to the creeks. You greatly improved all your relationships, especially with partners and close friends.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your sociable evenings with co-workers will be very rewarding for the next month. You're an excellent time to resolve any difficulties you might have in the workplace.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Creative activities and/or educational activities are very good now. Romantic opportunities also abound! Now love could come to you (the "other one").

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Do whatever you can to make others feel good about you. Your popularity is at the next few weeks. You might want to buy something beautiful for you home.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You romantic situation with others will improve in the forseeable future. This is a good time for negotiations and for working partnerships.

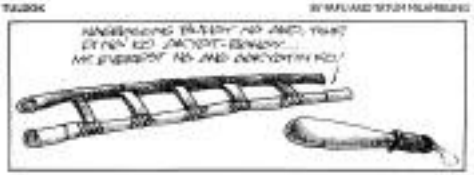
DAILY CROSSWORD

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE — BY NINO ALBERA

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TALIBOK — BY MAYUMI SITUM-MUMBUENG



FEEDBACK

Take a break

From Izel Reyes Lacdache (www.pardo-cinnellbrk-building-street), Makati City:

GMA TV's "Sunday Pop Superstar" should take a break, reassess its format and concentrate on discovering versatile talents—with star quality—who can actually perform.

[Previous winners] can sing, yes. But performers, they're not.

From Paolo Manuel Sulit, Anzures St., San Pablo City:

To Billy John Pacardo: Invalid Santos is the best singing champ to emerge since Sarah Geronimo and Kyla. The jurors know better than you.

How Cherry Pie spent her birthday

From page A1-1

...mous honors is well. "The ballet was opened last Feb. 18. About 20-1 children, ages 12 to 17 auditions different job to Metro Manila, were brought here. It's good that Cordel's talented, for performances similar Manila, is a social worker by profession."

Business functionaries accompanied Cherry Pie, St. Cecilia, the vice primed by friends, relatives, their members, her manager, or Ali Sandella, fellow actress Jaclyn Jose and Gardo Versoza and TV director Bobby Bonay.

She couldn't have pulled it off without her friends, the birthday girl says.

"The food was provided by sisters Sonia Cruz, a cooking diva. Bhadol, an Ilokano Go to Thing (the 600-GMA cooking show she acclaim), Isabova a show operator, along with new Daisy, 16-Top Supermarket and Mother Mercedes. Mommy Sonny for purchases I this helped," Cherry Pie adds.

There's still a lot of work to be done: Cherry Pie and Body insist. "The kids eventually need bath soaps, toothpaste, shampoo and slippers. Five TV sets wouldn't last, either," she says. "Even shoes will do."

Her next wish: Soon is a chance "to share the blessings I have been receiving," according to Cherry Pie.

Apart from "Marian" and "Dahlia," which are both in the can, she is also shooting between the sets of the family drama "I Wanna Be Happy" under Dado, and the horror flick "Among Kung Llingan," under Jose Carreon.

Her birthday wish: "That people will not ignore their kids. They need our help. They need our love." Inspirational bday wish, indeed. It's up to the community to take charge if no one else will."

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GALLERIA

1 X-MEN 3 – THX	6 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 X-MEN 3	7 POSEIDON
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	9 OVER THE HEDGE
4 THE DA VINCI CODE	9 THE DA VINCI CODE
5 X-MEN 3	10 THE DA VINCI CODE

ERMITA

1 X-MEN 3	
2 POSEIDON	5 X-MEN 3
3 SLITHER	6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 X-MEN 3	7 OVER THE HEDGE

METRO EAST

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	5 OVER THE HEDGE
2 X-MEN 3	6 X-MEN 3
3 POSEIDON X-MEN 3	7 X-MEN 3
4 THE DA VINCI CODE	8 THE DA VINCI CODE

NOVALICHES

1 POSEIDON	4 X-MEN 3
2 X-MEN 3	5 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 THE DA VINCI CODE	6 OVER THE HEDGE

CITYSQUARE MALABON | **PIONEER**

1 X-MEN 3	1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 X-MEN 3
3 RESERVE	3 OVER THE HEDGE
4 RESERVE	4 THE DA VINCI CODE

STA. ROSA | **LIPA**

1 THE DA VINCI CODE	1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 OVER THE HEDGE	3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 X-MEN 3	4 X-MEN 3
	5 X-MEN 3

DASMARIÑAS | **ANGELES**

1 THE DA VINCI CODE	1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 X-MEN 3	3 OVER THE HEDGE
4 OVER THE HEDGE	4 X-MEN 3

IMUS | **STARMILLS**

1 THE DA VINCI CODE	1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 POSEIDON
4 OVER THE HEDGE	4 OVER THE HEDGE
5 X-MEN 3	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 / X-MEN 3
6 X-MEN 3	6 X-MEN 3

BACOLOD | **ILOILO**

1 X-MEN 3	1 X-MEN 3
2 X-MEN 3 / POSEIDON	2 AQUAMARINE
3 THE DA VINCI CODE / WI 3	3 OVER THE HEDGE
4 THE SENTINEL	4 X-MEN 3
5 THE DA VINCI CODE	5 SUBMERGED / THE DA VINCI CODE
6 SILENT HILL	6 THE DA VINCI CODE

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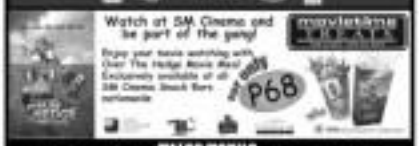

Tulfo brothers too fierce for th

MON: 'I'm terrified of laughter, I can't look directly into it [or I'll] die laughing,' declares Mon Tulfo

'We just need to show dishonest people that we're angry, so they realize that we'll really run after them'

By Marinel R. Cruz

OTHER NETWORKS refused to air our show. They said we're too forceful, too fierce for our own good," said controversial journalist Mon Tulfo.

TAKE FIVE

Mon is the host of "Isumbong Mo! (Tulfo Brothers)," the DZIQ-TV public service program that premiered on May 20. He shares hosting duties with his equally hard-hitting younger siblings Wally and Erwin.

"If we change our style according to how those networks want it, we won't be as effective," Mon told a group of entertainment writers in a gathering last week. "I can't be of much help to our fellow Filipinos that way. Bond sa akin 'yan. Sabi ko."

Wally added: "Walang nagsasabi ng mga 'Tulfos.' That is why we get death threats almost every day. That's okay. We've weathered that."

According to Erwin, a TV network is always torn between profit and control when choosing public affairs programs. He explained: "If a TV channel is profit-minded, malalaman ang mga palabas. It's always hard to get advertisers to commit to a public service program. In the three of us we really discussed it. Before we going to let advertisers dictate the kind of show we would have on our show? We decided to make a stand...for public service."

In the hour-long show, Mon tackles complaints filed against government officials and men in uniform. Wally handles consumer, city problems, such as unfair labor practices or issues in garbage collection.

"Erwin is in charge of exposés and surveillance," Mon said. "That's his specialty."

Mon talked to Inquirer Entertainment recently.

ERWIN: "I...TV

Gif

VIEWING

Nestor
U. Torre

WE'VE MADE A MENTAL NOTE to watch this new play "Doubt," showing at the RCBC Theatre from June 2 to 18.

Aside from its being a Tony and Pulitzer Prize winner, John Patrick Shanley's play is a must-see because it tackles the currently topical issue of the fate of the clergy.

More personally, we want to appreciate the performance of Cherie Gil as a nun who suspects a very young priest of abusing a student, and Maricris Montilla's portrayal of the parent.

The Diwata comeback has got back a long way to where we've loved her medium. Remember Gil, in the magazine TV show, "Startbugs," with Pete Ros, Rey Vita and Gigi Lawsin as co-hosts.

Rommate was a beautiful and gifted actress in those days, but she was new to TV hosting, so we had to boost her confidence. In no doing, we became rather close—and, with her, her partner Sam[illegible] Zaldivar Mejia, and their children Michael, Mark and Cherie, who were just kids at the time.

That said, we saw good performance in Cherie, and know that she wouldn't use that comic role for her own advantage.

As for Ricardo, he's the good-looking and talented grandson of the Ella's Marcellan, who over my TV colleague and best buddy for many years.

Like Cherie, we also met Ricardo as a kid at his "Mama's"

Feedback

FROM Lara Ernesto Quirino: "I've just read the article on Gil and the Code' between Cherie Gil and Ricardo Cayanan with an E. I'd appreciate the clarification, I remember that the family-owned Bling Bling purse with Rick Cayanan S did not have the great finesse we've been used to."

"Usually, you do the confirmation. Carmela Cayanan, personal assistant to Ricardo Cayanan."

DM did not respond to the dictionary nor to Carmela Cayanan. The Cherie Gil with the S, however, I am optimistic that the correct spelling will soon be restored."

Finds Super-store

(SM MALL Executive Finds Superstore was inaugurated on Saturday. The 1,000-square-meter store's opening was highlighted by a Fashion show by the exclusive pool line of Amy Mercado...

cannot find Christian Bautista

Beyond 'Feast'

THE MICHAEL Sally Field star[illegible] and the Broadway[illegible] writers," it is[illegible] video. The movie[illegible] cage fights, and[illegible] already find[illegible] down. But[illegible] have some ot

heir own good?

MAYA: "We get drunk three times every day, you're used to it."

What movies would never land on "Strawberry Blu"?

We'd rather not cover hard drugs, money squabbles, labor management and domestic problems. Apaw-sila-tanong mahirapan sa sagutin problem.

Do you remember the first time you faced the camera? What was it like?

I remember that it was a show with Doug Vaus and Bey Limpot called "Action 9." I felt very self-conscious. I didn't know what to do. I was so conscious with my being Bisaya. Mahiyan ang dila ko.

A director friend, Hiro dito Dimayuga, told me to just be myself. He said "Isang pild ka, ipakita mo."

You have nine siblings. Was there ever a time when you were young, and more what?

I never fought with Buffy, Ejercito or Ben. I went down to school. But I remember that, back then, we were so poor that we fought for food. Ang resulta, ang maliliit na bagay ay nagiging malaking issue. Nagkakasakitan kami ng sugat.

If your life were to be made into a biopic, which local actor would you choose to play yourself?

A movie outfit offered me something like that, in fact. They wanted to get Phillip Salvador. I even got paid P300,000 for that. I don't know why the project didn't push through.

Which do you fear most—cockroaches, spiders or rats?

Baby, as soon ang mga ito. Pfft! Tsinelas del ell, d'buglito.

I don't know why, I'm not scared of riding helicopters or airplanes but I'm scared of looking down from tall buildings, or climbing into the sea. I also don't like going up the mountains. I remember one time when we did, to hunt in the woods. Hahaha. Ako ng hunger. I cried. I couldn't move.

SHANG CINEPLEX
X-MEN 3
THE DA VINCI CODE
X-MEN 3
OVER THE HEDGE
PREMIERE THEATRE
THE DA VINCI CODE
Catch the Cineplex Special!
A Blockbuster Gift for All Seasons
The Shang Cineplex Gift Certificates
Shangri-la Plaza

ted thespians in 'Doubt'

led by stalwarts Ilo Ambas Iwasa, Peter Bayle, Shirley Jacob and Mark Harmon also star.

'Echo' newscasters

IN THIS modern day and age, it's shocking to hear newscasters on local TV and radio who still report the news in the archaic, melodramatic and overblown style of the 1960s and '70s.

They speak with emotion, fire and histrionics, and appear to have built-in loudspeakers and "echo machines" in their chests.

Then also have so-called news splits like in the words they intone, pa-dramatic tone that end in monosyllants. One fresh-out evening, we hollered to [illegible] some of these "echo" words, and came up with interesting list.

[illegible] Hyuked-uh. Malacañang-uh. Senate-uh. Senador-ul. Kongresman-uh. MOA-ne-uh. Reinvestment-uh. Peso-uh. Brodcast-uh.

You get the picture.

The big question is, why don't these "echo" newscasters' bosses tell them to stop speaking in such a stilted way?

Could it be that they think the listening and viewing public is impressed with this artificial style of reporting?

If so, they're terribly mistaken. Times have changed, people have grown up, and teens have become more refined and up-to-date. So, "echo" newscasters, finally clear—and welcome to the New Millennium!

JEMERLYN Hermada at the opening d'finds, where she teaches new clothing line.

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
X-MEN 3
X-MEN 3
THE DA VINCI CODE
OVER THE HEDGE
THE DA VINCI CODE
ART-HOUSE GUARANTEED SEATS
POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
PROMENADE
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Cinema 2000 Multinational
Cinema 2000 Multinational
Cinema 2000 Multinational
Blue Wave
SUPER CINERAMA
stmall
Cinema 2000 Multinational
Lianas Cinema
Lianas Cinema
Lianas WorldCity
Cinema 2000 Multinational
Cinema 2000 Multinational
Cinema 2000 Multinational

Gary V's 'Relevance'

From page A2-1

his time. He went so far as scoring a date with some of them for weekends.

To the media, Gary has always been a jovial and pleasant interviewee. Hardly ever making a bear, Gary can talk through any subject, for he's not for being erratic and from Christ.

"This album took me four years to finish," he confided. "I got delayed by so many things—marking, producing, MAAP (on ABS-CBN). For a while, I also lost my songwriting skills. I don't know why. But it did come back, so here's the album."

One of the two songs he wrote for "Relevance" is the sudden song he has ever written, according to Gary. The song is "Even for a While."

"It has words like, 'Why do hearts feel the way they do. Why does mine want to say I love you 'till the end of time,' 'till I lose my mind, 'till it's over?' I started writing this in the '90s. People ask why I wrote it. I tell them, 'I don't know, I just did.'"

Through wit and understanding of the fan's joyful character, the song shows not a dark side but rather a sensitive heart that knows what it's like to be broken. He admitted, "It was inspired by people I know."

A bird of hush

Popular young singers are still in custody owed by Gary's presence.

Lagdameo recalled, "We were at [this event] once. Some bands were performing and people were not really listening, they were talking. Then Gary came on stage and they all shut up, and then cried. There's this kind of attention that Gary commands, which all other artists want to reach."

CONDUCTING an enticing performance by the Retired Officers, Wives and Widows Association

MUSIC Lady Cora

WITH fellow Cebuano stars Gloria Sevilla and Caridad Sanchez.

Introducing Mrs. Bonny Serrano

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by August de la Cruz

UNKNOWN TO THE JEEPney drivers plying the Camp Cramo-Libis route, the unassuming piano teacher that regularly avails of a senior citizen discount is Mr Bonny Serrano—also known as Visayan cinema's singing sweetheart Cora Real.

"I only pay P6," says the 78-year-old widow of a war hero. "Whenever I see the street sign [bearing my husband's name], I feel proud. I feel rich, even though I live a simple life."

Here is wealth that money can't match, she asserts.

"A ramp in Mandaue is also named after him," she continues. "[Pres] the Philippine Navy base. PT110 Bonny Serrano, the biggest

YESTERDAY and fastest of five boats decorated by the Korean government. I asked the Navy: 'Where's my boat? I heard the soldiers gets free rides.' The Navy told me it was in Mindanao chasing the Abu Sayyaf."

Her Bonny

Col. Bonny Serrano was the most honorable Filipino soldier in the Roman Mile, Cora says, proudly.

His exploits were the basis of the G'fr movie "Korea," directed by Lamberto Avellana and penned by Nestor Sevilla. Superior. It starred Jaime de la Rosa and Nida Blanca.

"His most astonishing achievement was swimming with his troop across Yalu River in winter," Cora recounts. "His troop suffered numerous losses, but with only a few-man commando, he led the capture of 77 North Korean soldiers. If not for the Filipinos, the American couldn't have crossed enemy lines."

He was only 22 at the time, she recalls.

When my husband died after suffering a stroke on Jun. 2, 1993, he only had P20 to his name," she says, sadly now.

Three months after his passing, Jaworksa was renamed Bonny Serrano Road.

At the colonel's wake, Cora recounts, then President Ferdinand Marcos admiringly glanced at the 40 medals on Serrano's casket and asked a question: "Are all these his?"

"Yes, Mr. President," the widow replied, "and he earned every single one of them."

"My husband was frustrated [with the system]," Cora says. "He had been bypassed for promotions a few times because he wasn't a 'yes'-man. Now I am look anyone in the eye and proudly declare: I am the widow of Bonny Serrano."

Equally formidable

As they say, an equally formidable woman is behind a formidable man.

Cora Real was born Corazon Ribaral in Jo Ribaral and Isabel Cabasan in Cebu on May 27, 1928.

"My Mama was one of the first child stars in Cebuano movies," Cora says. Her mom is also the sister of musicians and film director Jose Cabanero, husband of 1950s singing superstar Lil-

"TO BONNY darling, with love."

MITY (President Ferdinand Marcos or Bonny's wake in January 1978.

ian Velez.

In fact, Cora, at age 4, made her debut in a Lilian Velez movie, "My Pet. Just just made me sit atop a table. That was my first movie, the-it-do-all-that's I can remember."

At age 9, she started singing in radio shows like "Harana" in the Queen City of the South. "I worked on duty[...with Nick Faraulak," Cora says. "While doing radio, I attended night school at the San Carlos University."

She also exploited concerts with her voice Mode Arnaz and his family. "My Dad's shows in Davao and Iloilo. My usual coaches were Tyrs Joe and Manuel Silva, the father of Pipi Lilian."

The radio star also worked as dubber. "We dubbed Tagalog movies to Cebuano." She was the Visayan voice for D'R, Passions and Anjanguito stars Bernardo Bernardo, Bobby Linda and Carmencita Abad, among others.

She acted in 31 Cebuano movies—debuting in Veras Productions' "Damaged" at age 11.

"I played the best friend of Bonny Serrano," she remembers.

A former Miss Mindanao titlist, the later became a contract star of Azucena Pictures. "My salary for one P50 Cigar movie."

In 1950, the Cebuano beauty created new to Tagalog movies...in the 1951 musical "Dam sa Gagmay" or "Sesli ng Pag-ibig," co-starring Priscilla Collona, Mars Bautista Jr. and Jose Mari.

Visayan singer, actress and wife of a war hero, Cora Real says music helped her survive young widowhood plus all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

CORA Real at age 2

SHY YOUNG actress with the glamorous Rosa Rosal

Coincidentally, Miss Mindanao's escort at the title Philippines pageant night was Bautista...who later became the husband of her frequent co-star Gloria Sevilla.

Cora also acted with Gloria in Cebuano movies like "Leonora" and "Bahin Lang," another memorable film was "Handumanan."

Cora, then 16, was on the verge of inking a contract with D'R when she met and fell in love with 21-year-old soldier Bonny Serrano—one of the country's most eligible bachelors.

She looks back: "He was coming from other women—Miss Universe from Rosario of Poland, Miss Mindanao Hilda Whitehorn, G'Howards queen Nida Blanca and Cosmos Lace, daughter of a general. Still, he chose me, a struggling actress."

MR. & Ms Bonny Serrano

After they tied the knot, Bonny ordered Cora to quit the movies. "He asked me to choose between marriage and career, with the warning that if I chose the latter he'd make me bark to my Mama, bought-her...like a parrot marked 'Returned to Sender'!"

For over a decade, Cora consistently stayed in the sidelines and gave her husband three children—Rosie (now, 50 years old), Bong (38 Bonny Jr., 49) and Johanna (39).

Her husband treated her "like a princess," she says.

A widow at 30

Then, all of a sudden, her world came crashing down.

"I got married at 18 and was widowed at 30," she remembers. "I thought my life would end, too. I thought of slashing my wrists. I cried all the time. I was raising three children and no monthly pension [from the military] was only P658.22."

Music saved Cora from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. "I started doing shows and concerts again. I even worked as a singer in Japan for two years."

In the early 1970s, she co-starred in "Binta Binya," "Dalawang Alindahaw" and "Little Romeo and Juliet"—movies produced by her-then buddy Gloria Sevilla.

Later, she taught physical education (elementary, secondary, ballroom dancing and dramatics), voice, as well as piano, at the YWCA... for 15 years.

For her musical gift, she is eternally grateful to psychiatrist Gerardo Climaco, who taught her piano, and Pipi Lilian, who bequeathed to her precious pieces [music-sheets].

Music continues to sustain her through these tough times.

Recently, I learned that the military would soon declare P2,758 from my monthly pension for the next 20 months," she sighs. "I was disappointed."

Fortunately, she has more pleasant things on her mind.

She is the official conductor and pianist of the Retired Officers' Wives and Widows Association. "Most of our members are in their 70s and 80s, but they've remained active for a lot of years."

Recently, she played the piano in Malacañang, accompanying classical singer Jaculdad Mary in a show for the diplomatic corps.

She still teaches voice and piano. Among her students are teens, a mentally challenged man and a blind girl.

"I can teach anyone to sing," she quips. "I'm very patient and persistent."

Yes, indeed. For her wisdom, she is happy to date the passages that traverse the road named after the hero who was her lover, and beloved, husband.

TODAY with daughter Johanna, son Bonny Jr. and grandson Joaquin.

ENTERTAINMENT

All the movies you want to see on the big screen
NOW SHOWING at the Star Group of Malls
Starmall
Metropolis Star
1. The Da Vinci Code
2. Mission: Impossible 3
3. Poseidon
4. Over the Hedge
5. The Da Vinci Code
6. Mission: Impossible 3
Everyday Family Day at Starmall

SINGING VISITORS. "Love Big Stars" monthly finalists visited the Inquirer recently to show off vocal skills that subsequently propelled three of them to the next level of the ABS-CBN competition. The trio is (from left) Christian Oleg, Jan Ingle and Angelie Urquia in the Mild and Lauren Bernardo (second from right) in the Big division.

NGAYONG GABI
ANG BUONG BAYAN AY
MULING TITINGALA SA LANGIT.
IPAGLALABAN ANG PAG-IBIG
ILILIGTAS ANG DAIGDIG
MARS RAVELO'S
CAPTAIN BARBELL
LUNES-BIYERNES pagkatapos ng 24 Oras
sa nangunguna Teleserbisyo ng
GMA

Bright Belinda!

SEXY BELINDA (RIGHT SEXY) dre is Kyngdo Jakarta, Indone sia, and would to remember about that until he mo ment they before this moment for the Philip pines.

The singer an nounced the during an interview at the Pasadena ce Country Club in Ortigas Alley, where Belinda Dauther Luana Bernardo Bolinao Aguilar was present. "This is my first visit with an international management agency," said Bright, 22, who is now handled by Glam Philippines which has branches in Malaysia and other Asian countries.

Two local recording artists who have made it big in Indonesia are Christian Bautista and Regine Velasquez.

Machete, is that you?

The words of a children's ballad-turned-rock-en-roll tune Bambu Runggis, "Ayo Mbolang," of the two characters on the GMA-7 series "Dyip," Cecille Mbroglio remains at the next door neighborhood comedy concept recognized the actor as "Machete," after his 1980s Betamax movie star. The youngest fellow rookie Jaclyn Jose to emerge to mainstream. "These other guys have been acting for long."

Hiwa-ca-ba

Actress and Quezon City councilor Alfe Bautista says she is eager to become a mommy for a second time around. She plans to name her brother-in-law/sister-in-law, after her husband Wowie Bautista, to become Mustin Antonio.

Oprah's 'problem'

In New York, the Associated Press reports that Rapper Ludacris and his fiancée Eudoxie Bridges have welcomed their first child, Cameron Ludacris Bridges.

Rapper-actor Ice Cube also has a brief with her. "I've been invited to three projects pitched to her, but I cannot be associated with a project unless I'm involved," Ice Cube tells Kelli magazine (not Jolly Wilson, according to E! "Machete's got our elbow with Hollywood. She's not alone experts, children's rights and lying authors in her show. It's not a cop-for-hire, she's for hire, who is?"

Decided to divorce

Double Oscar-winner Hilary Swank has divorced her husband of more than eight years, actor Chad Lowe. Against Almost Famous star, reports, naming People Magazine.

Swank and Lowe "have jointly decided to divorce," the couple's spokesperson Jeffrey Bensimon, told the magazine. "They continue to be friends."

GMA Lowe

The couple married on September 26, 1995, after seven after meeting at a party. They have no children.

Pamela's cause

MP stars recently Beatrice Anne Pamela Anderson were in Tokyo on Friday to promote AIDS awareness in Asia. The actress-model also had time to upload by her own experiences, having been diagnosed earlier with Hepatitis C, an ungrouped virus responsible for liver illness and weak medical body.

Baby Shelton

It's a baby boy for Uwen Shelton, but he will also have father Friday, according to ABS.

Shelton and her husband Gavin Rossdale "are overjoyed" Angelina Jolie Gringo Rossdale, 7.3 lbs on May 26, 2006," said the statement on her website, adding that the child was born in Los Angeles.

BUSINESS
Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

PNOC unit to go public in September

IPO to cover firm's P7-B funding requirement from 2006 to 2009

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO-ENERGY DEVELOPment Corp. (PNOC-EDC) will be selling 30-40 percent of its shares in the local bourse by September, junking a block equity sale model for its privatization.

Eduardo Mañalac, president and chief executive of PNOC-EDC parent firm PNOC, said the PNOC-EDC board and privatization committee formally approved the privatization plan.

The next steps would be to secure the approval of the PNOC board, and then of the Privatization Council. These approvals should be in place within this week, he said.

"The intent or hope is to complete the (initial public offering) by the start of September. We want to get it done quickly," he said.

The target of 30-40 percent was put in place, he said, to allow some room for adjustment, depending on how the market would react to the offering.

Mañalac said the financial advisor for the deal, GLA Capital Partners, organized some foreign roadshow.

Part of the IPO proceeds would be used to address "hidden" payments for some PNOC-EDC build-operate-transfer (BOT) contracts falling due some time in the third quarter, he said.

This would amount to between $40 million and $50 million, he said. The next big payment, around $90 million, would have to be made in 2009.

PNOC Bo

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱53.70 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 26, 2006

₱53.86 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 26, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Technical rebound seen

SHARE PRICE EARNINGS (PHILIPPINES)

to rebound this week after spilling [illegible] and weeks due to [illegible]

"However, the upside may be limited as some fund managers are still [illegible]

a correction of a long-term uptrend," AB Capital Securities said.

The PSEi lost 88.58 points or 2.66 percent to 3,240.33 last week.

AB Capital Securities said it is [illegible]

WHAT'S INSIDE

MVP's most valuable party B2

Asia urged to curb reliance on US for growth B4

Packaging firm defaults on debts, say banks B12

MVP's most valuable party

WITH SO LESS THAN CORAZON Aquino and Gerardo Roxas leading the Hyatt guests, Manuel V. Pangilinan on Thursday celebrated with his anniversary guests the 25th anniversary of the First Pacific Group in Hong Kong in a star-studded celebration.

And, in a sentiment that all is well after the Indo-Chinagate bid for PLDT and Metro Pacific resigned relations between MVP and the Inquirer, First Pacific chief Anthoni Salim toasted the PLDT chief and his fellow First Pacific guests and his fellow First Pacific and Indofood pantomath Soedarpo Sastio, saying that MVP was like a "brother" to him.

The Firstpro of the business, the Indonesian of Sino, who's talked to Dean Dr., and the PLDT board were moving the guests from to business dean from Manila.

Outgoing PLDT board director, SM Investor Tessie Sy also attended the affair, as well as Benpet Corp. chair Benjamin Philip Romualdez, accompanying his wife, Interim president Amanda Oyeyo.

No Filipino politician or government official was invited, except for Sen. Freddie Roxas, in his capacity as chairman of his surname's wife, Sharon Cuneta, a PLDT fanat.

While Manny Stevens emceeing, Sharon Cuneta, Bob Ledesma, Tessie Padilla, Toni Rhodesha, Boy Aquino, Mon David and Christian Bautista rained the swallow-fullmoon of the supply hotel into a Philippine-style festive event.

Guests, including former First Pacific Metro Pacific executive Vicente Tiyam and Ricardo Reyes, who could no longer be accommodated in the Post Seasons, were booked at the nearby Ritz Carlton.

To celebrate the anniversary for owners of the Hong Kong-based conglomerate, the driver First Pacific decided to come each carried a gold ingot, in seamless enough, according to the Salim chairman proportion to pick up the Hong Kong gold in no time flat.

MVP himself, First Pacific and PLDT board member Ambassador Albert del Rosario announced, had been conferred by President Macapagal-Arroyo with the Order of Lakandula award, rank of Ramaldaldo, on account of the remarkable turnaround and the subsequent improved tax code's barring of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

If the award exchange of PLDT Smart Filbel continues this year, what kind of corporate collection could be for the taking when MVP wants to fete?

Peso and the Big Mac index

THE's son's coordinator of the Big Mac index shows that the Philippine currency is—despite the year's ups and downs—still 44 percent undervalued compared to the US dollar.

On US dollar, by the Economist magazine 29 years ago using the US household point of Big Mac as the benchmark, the index compares the local prices of the hamburger in US dollar to provide a rate, if somewhat far-reducing, measure of the purchasing power parity of the different currencies in relation to the US pound. The method is based on the theory that exchange rates should move towards their rate that would equalize the prices of an identical basket of goods and services in any two countries.

In contrast, the Indonesian Big Mac, at its currency at their 22 exchange rates, is slightly cheap, at -46 percent. Hong Kong and Thailand, 44 percent, Malaysia, -31 percent, Mexico, -31 percent, and China, -56 percent.

Unlike during the Asia years when the peso was trading at the 39-to-one and the Philippines was supposedly had the cheapest Big Mac along with China, chilling now, it is now slightly easier on the pocket to stroll down the same burger in Hong Kong, despite the tasty still being one of the world's most expensive cities.

Money-go-round

■ ISCEPT for president CEO Ramon Ang, who turns 70 this year and who has announced his intention to retire. The exit of the top Ilonggo businessman officials will be integrated with Steven Reed, new incept.

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Persistent criticisms against BIR chief alarm business groups

LEADING BUSINESS and several business groups have started against an apparent smear campaign against Commissioner Jose Mario Bolong of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), saying a ruthless campaign "is unfair, unnecessary and counterproductive."

The Tax Management Association of the Philippines (TMAP) said there appeared to be "a sustained effort to project Dr. April revenue collection figures as a dismal failure despite the actual improvement in collection performance levels."

"There had been some shortfalls in the past but this was the only time that we were seeing a fifth detail being cascaded down to public as an alleged collection failure, the group said.

TMAP president Glenna Arguelles also expressed concern on the apparent effort to project Bolong as "a controversial bungling no to be most desired."

"We cannot understand why a man being made to appear like the BIR chief was under threat of being fired by the Finance Secretary due to the April collection figures, she added.

"If there is a need to bring in a new BIR chief due to political pressures, what don't they just ask Bolong to get quietly and we are sure he will just be happy to go," she added. The pro-business private sector on the April collection figures and the threat of removing Bolong was sending anxiety in the business community, Arguelles explained.

Other business groups earlier condemned the government against replacing Bolong "on an ad hoc to upon the pain achieved by the country in terms of investor confidence."

Audit of tax deductions pushed

By Michelle V. Rosco

THE BUREAU OF Internal Revenue has been urged to step up efforts in auditing the taxable income declared by corporate taxpayers following the release of a study finding that overdeclaration of allowable deductions may have occurred.

The National Tax Research Center (NTRC), tasked to conduct tax-related studies, said in a research paper that on average, allowable deductions claimed by corporate taxpayers reached 63.64 percent of their gross income. The BIR is very low amount at least that the BIR could tax.

NTRC said a significant number of corporate firms exceeded prescribed ceilings on allowable deductions that could be claimed.

It said 23 percent of 494 companies declared deductions for "entertainment expenses" whose amounts breached prescribed ceiling, each of 23 percent of

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Development with equity

NO FREE LUNCH
Carlito S. Rabulo

LAST WEEKEND, SOME 30 PROjects proposed by various NGOs all over the country were handing over a million pesos each in the second Bankaging Bayan competition. This is the local version of the World Bank's popular "Development Innovation Marketplace," which is open-handed by the institution's cooperation with numerous partners in a number of countries around the world, including at the head office in Washington, D.C. Hosting together consumers from various local and international funding partners, the competition brings together the best ideas from the nongovernment sector for initiatives to help uplift Filipinos' lives. The theme for this year's competition was Development with Equity, in line with the theme of the World Bank's last World Development Report.

More and more

The various NGO project proposals competing for the Bankaging Bayan funding support represent somewhat initiatives that would pursue development with equity at the grassroots or community level. To set the tone for the weekend activity that showcased the various competing projects, I was asked to speak along with DSWD Secretary Esperanza Cabral and Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo on the competition's theme. Secretary Cabral described the government's current efforts to combat poverty spearheaded by the department, particularly the targeted Pantawid Pamilya program. Mayor Robredo shared his numerous exemplary initiatives for his city that have won him Ruff of Honor status in the annual Governing Peak awards, among many other local and international awards for and his city have earned.

I spoke on how to get out of the narrow, shallow and hollow development outcomes that we have tended to achieve through the years. My message, this challenge extends to the major chunk of SME provinces, empowering LGUs, harnessing NGO-business-government partnerships, and pushing bigger private sector-driven reforms.

Clearing SME hurdles

Many of us now recognize that the big business-dominated economic growth path we have used in the past decades brought more our current situation of inequitable development. In the past year alone, large corporations have fairly healthy bottom lines, even triple-digit growth rates in their net profits, even as hunger reached record highs and human development indicators especially on nutrition and education further turned for the worse. Our economic performance has been subpar to the familiar 40-20 rule: 20 percent of the economy's output comes from the largest 20 percent of our productive enterprises. I have long held the view that if we are to subside at least a million jobs every year, we probably employ the same number of new workers who enter the labor force annually, those jobs must come from small and medium enterprises, not large ones. For one thing, the cost of creating one job in the SME sector is a fraction of what it costs to do so in a large enterprise. An SME approach also promotes more geographically and socially dispersed job creation.

Helping SMEs requires doing three-pronged to address their traditional difficulties in accessing financing, technology, and markets. But it also requires that SMEs practice "competition," a cooperative form of competition wherein firms are prepared to band together especially to meet volume demands from buyers abroad. I have heard so many times of how the banyo-banyo (individualistic) attitude of our business people have led to countless missed opportunities in the export markets.

LGUs do it best

The LGUs are best-placed to pursue development with equity. There are few units of government closest to the people, and to the problems they have. And they are naturally obliged to be responsive to the needs of the poorest sectors, as local officials need their constituents' votes to survive.

Mayor Robredo spoke on the crucial challenge of replicating good projects and good practices. He should know. He has done so many wonderful things in Naga City that one would think other LGUs would readily emulate. But too often, people—especially politicians—tend their own backyard as backwash, and shy away from "merely" copying or customizing someone else's inspirational experience to source soup. But there are already numerous development practices of the LGUs worth trying to be copied and adapted by provincial-local sectors in their own local conditions. One only needs to look at the more than 10 years of Ground Gaining Peak awardees and finalists to get a wealth of ideas on how LGUs can effectively uplift the lives of the disadvantaged.

Caring and sharing

Development initiatives need last when there is synergies between the government and nongovernment sectors, with the latter including private business, NGOs, people's organizations and communities themselves. Initiatives like the Ground Gaining, adopt-a-school, and Operation Compassion have already done much good. There is a wealth of goodwill in Filipinos' hearts, waiting for opportunities to find expression, provided through tangible mechanisms for helping a poor fellow Filipino. Through funding support, Bankaging Bayan has just enabled some 30 initiatives to harness such partnerships. But we don't need the World Bank and its funding partners to do so. Those among us with deep pockets can find our own ways of helping. Ha Filipino' well-endowed expat telecom owning money movements, effective and enduring mechanisms for sharing.

Comments welcome at clrabulo@yahoo.com.ph

Crackdown on illegal foreign insurers pushed

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY has pushed the government to crackdown on unlicensed foreign insurers whose illegal operations in the country have been blamed for loss of market shares by legitimate players.

The Philippine Life Underwriters Association (PLIA) stated that illegal selling of insurance products by Swiss-based Zurich Life, which do not carry a license to operate in the Philippines.

"Such transactions made by Zurich Financial Services/Zurich Insurance/Zurich Life are not only a breach of business to non-domestic insurers but also a significant loss of tax revenues to our government," Wim Cepiain, PLIA president, told the reporters.

Cepiain said PLIA has already asked the government to ban the Insurance Commission and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

PLIA's Jaime Domingo, executive vice president of Sun Life, said that unlicensed foreign-owned insurance companies unfair competition to legitimate players because the former, being unlicensed, evade the payment of appropriate taxes, including the 5-percent tax on insurance premiums.

PLIA officers also said operations of unlicensed insurance firms make customers vulnerable to fraud because these firms do not meet minimum capitalization requirements.

Zurich used to be a licensed seller of life insurance products, but was eventually dissolved when it was bought by Manulife.

MVP's most valuable ...

From page B1

• TIBUSTIA Bernardo Cruz, scion of one of the founders of the Bon Bank and Trust Co., has been elected president of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines for a three-year term. Cruz was also the first Filipina to be elected president of the Soroptimist International of the Americas.

Heard through the grapevine

PALAWAN Gov. Abel Reyes has written National Economic Secretary Angelo Reyes, asking his department to stop the mining operations of two companies by saying Lucio Tan's Manila-Mining Corp. and Lucio Tan's Macro-Asia in Brooke's Point, Palawan.

(Email: ccdulo_tabulo@yahoo.com.ph/clrabulo_pal@yahoo.com)

Audit ...

From page B1

thers claimed dollar-store for "charitable contributions" when costs also extended a given ceiling.

In doing the study the NTRC and income tax returns for 2003 submitted by firms not considered a large taxpayer. A non-large taxpayer is a firm whose income tax liabilities is below P1 million.

Because of very high claims of allowable deductions, the NTRC suggested that the BIR implement measures that could help it better detect the accuracy of allowable deductions claimed by corporate taxpayers.

The NTRC added that the BIR should serially enforce the "industry benchmarking" program, which the revenue agency recently introduced as a tax-collecting strategy.

Under the program, the BIR sets benchmarks on income and supposed tax payments per industry. Any taxpayer that will declare an income much lower than the benchmark for its industry would be subject to higher audit.

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SMC seen raising $1.1B from sale of Aussie stake

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONGLOMERATE San Miguel Corp. may raise about A$21.97 billion (approximately $1.1 billion) from the possible sale of its 49 percent stake in National Foods Ltd. through a private placement.

Sources said there were three investors interested in San Miguel's stake in the Australian dairy company.

Peso-side Dim On possible sale of National Foods would be used to repay debts incurred by the company to fund its aggressive expansion into the Asia Pacific food and beverage market, sources said.

Sought for comment, SMC president Ramon S. Ang said: "There are offers but there are no material developments to disclose as of this time."

Sources estimated that National Foods might be worth A$5.6 billion today.

Last year, San Miguel beat rival bidder New Zealand's Fonterra Co-Operative Group to acquire Sir Nathan Rothschild-led investment bankers' stake in its bid for control of the dairy company. SMC offered to buy National Foods at A$21.9 billion, topping Fonterra's A$21.66 billion offer.

Showing its investment was worth the battle, National Foods reported sales revenue up by 5 percent to A$[illegible] million in the first quarter due to the growth in volume sales of its dairy and juice segments.

National Foods is integrated with another San Miguel-owned Australian juice brand, Berri Ltd.

Welcome sales for dairy and juice products grew 4 percent in the first quarter compared with the same period last year. No specific figures were mentioned in San Miguel's recently filed first quarter financial report.

Operating income also was 5 percent to A$207.1 million due to higher volumes and effective cost management.

To further benefit its business, National Foods had acquired Australian specialty cheese business Lactos Pty Ltd. from Fonterra firm Bongrain International/SA.

Lactos is one of Australia's leading specialty cheesemakers producing fine cheese under key brands Tasmanian Heritage, Blewery Valley and Australian Gold, its manufacturing operations are in Barrow and a smaller boutique cheese manufacturing facility at Ulverstone in Tasmania. It also has a cut and wrap facility in Mulgrave, Victoria.

The acquisition will increase National Foods' exposure in the fast growing, high-value cheese segment following its acquisition of The Bing Island Co. in February 2002.

"Lactos is a significant acquisition for National Foods and will contribute to the development of our growing cheese and gourmet foods business," National Foods managing director Ashley Waugh had said.

Israeli firm spends ₱500M to buy 40% of Filinvest unit

AFRICA ISRAEL INTERNATIONAL PROPERTIES Ltd., one of the biggest companies in Israel, has invested roughly half a billion pesos to acquire 40 percent of Cyberscape Properties Inc. (CPI), a subsidiary of Filinvest Alabang Inc.

Filinvest Development Corp. president Josephine Estrada Sy- said Africa Israel has been bullish about the demand for call center and was encouraged by the take-up of call center buildings in IMI's information technology park at the Northgate Cyberzone in Alabang.

Under an agreement signed with CPI, a Philippine Economic Zone Authority accredited facilities provider that promotes build-to-suit offices in IMI's Northgate Cyberzone, Africa Israel has agreed to subscribe to up to 40 percent of CPI.

The balance of 60 percent in CPI is owned by IAI.

Africa Israel has investments in real estate, shopping malls, energy, fashion, telecommunications, media and infrastructure. Its shares are traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.

Sy also said that the Filinvest Group was in talks with Africa Israel for other ways in which they could expand their partnership. She did not give details.

This year, IMI is asking P2.2 billion out of the Filinvest group's P4.5-billion budget for key projects to build IT buildings.

To address the growing demand for IT office spaces, CPI started constructing Plaza88, a six-storey building with a leasable area of 11,000 square meters at the Northbay Cybertown in Alabang last year. Plaza88 is currently being occupied by about a ten-year lease-out in this area include Genbet, an outsourcing subsidiary of General Electric and eBenefit.

CPI also broke ground last February on Plaza80, a mirror image of Plaza88, by the second quarter this year, a third building rising by both [illegible]

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PNOC unit to go public in Sept.

From page B1

Under the privatization plan, the geothermal power plants would be packaged with long-term power-purchase agreements. This assumes that the steam fields will not be included in the package.

In an earlier interview, PNOC-EDC president and chief executive Noel Agatep said the IPO proceeds would be enough to cover its funding requirements from this year to 2009.

"With the proceeds from the offering, we'll have enough funds, and we won't need to rely all the time on national government guarantees and on funds from our parent firm," he said.

From 2006 to 2009, PNOC-EDC account-ing manager Gloria Pascasio said the company's funding requirements amounted to ?? billion.

Of this, P1.9 billion would be used to fund the remaining payment requirements for its BOT contracts as well as its working capital requirements, and P1.4 billion would be used for the exploration of the geothermal areas that would generate an estimated additional 270 megawatts within the next two years, she said.

Another P748 million would handroll the construction of the Mindo power plant this year, and P962 million would be earmarked for the acquisition of a modernizing and the re-habilitation of PNOC-EDC's existing steam wells over the same period.

This year alone, she said PNOC-EDC's funding requirements reached P3.3 billion. Another P1.8 billion would be needed next year, P1.2 billion in 2008 and P930 million in 2009.

Agatep said PNOC-EDC was "near the end of [its] cash backdrop" at the last of its BOT payments would be made in 2009.

The company would then have a better handle on its cash, including the proceeds from its planned IPO, he said.

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Technical rebound seen

From page B1

the interest rate punches deals in the form of bonus, knocking down the PSEi back to the 2,000 level within the week before recovering last Friday near the 2,300 mark.

This was the third straight week that the local market was beaten up, bringing stock prices to what analysts called "an overacid territory" or a level where prices might be seen pick up all to bring the bottom.

Reports of massive redemptions from First Metro Investment Trust Corp. (FMTC), a host of investments offered by banks still high yields, all to accelerated the local market's drop, fueling selling spree in local equities.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

The Real Stripes Matter.

PLDT seeks to boost sagging landline business

New pricing scheme seen to perk up telco's core business

By Dixim L. Lucas

WITH A HIGH FREEDOM SCHEME, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) hopes to entice its biggest landline business, which has been overshadowed by mobile phones in recent years, according to a company official.

The new promo, which the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) approved last week, will initially be applied to "pilot areas" in order to test the business model and the technology that will be used to support it, PLDT spokesperson Ramon R. Isberto said.

"We do hope that this will better position us to perk up the landline business in the target areas," Isberto said.

The new scheme cuts the price of landline services to as low as P999 a month from the existing rate of over P1700 a month for residential subscribers.

Company officials clarified that the service will initially be launched only in selected target areas, although it will not be restricted to new PLDT clients only. This means that existing subscribers may opt to convert their services to the jet-priced "Economy Plans."

The pilot program is being conducted in order to test new service packages on a limited scale and to maximize capacity utilization in areas (voice, Bayan+ data, Internet, and multimedia) adding that the new service schemes "are designed to provide new subscribers additional options in terms of pricing and service features."

The results of PLDT's pilot program will determine which new areas the service will be promoted next.

ALP/LVO

Jaraula's parliament: Big hoax

CONSTANTINO JARAULA, CHAIR of the House committee on constitutional amendments, was quoted yesterday in the Philippine Daily Inquirer as saying that the Senate's parliamentary objection is not big deal.

He said that only under a parliamentary system might a minister from the tiny island province of Camiguin or Batanes ever hope to become prime minister—so long as he's popular in the area and returned to parliament. Why? Because under a parliamentary system, only the brightest is voted prime minister.

Jaraula was obviously implying that in a parliament, the ignorant masses do not vote. Only the highly educated members can elect leaders. As the communists in our midst would put it, Jaraula is elitist.

Any member from Camiguin or Batanes, whether or not he is the brightest or the dumbest, will be elected prime minister only if he heads the ruling party or coalition. He might be, by far, the dumbest of the lot. He will be consigned to the backbench if he heads the smallest party.

In a South Sibuyanon country some years ago, a confirmed idiot was elected prime minister. Fortunately for that country, it was a parliamentary system, the idiot resigned.

Then, Jaraula said that elections in a parliamentary system are much less expensive because the candidates for prime minister does not have to campaign nationwide. Tony Blair campaigned all over the United Kingdom to carve a solid majority for his New Labor Party. More recently, Angela Merkel campaigned all over Germany to become the first woman chancellor.

If Jaraula is interested, I will lend him a documentary showing Hitler hitting three cities a day, every day, in a campaign that won for the Nazi party 38 percent of the seats, making it the largest party in the Reichstag in 1932, his own the first to use the airplane to campaign.

If Lozo were running under a parliamentary system in EDSA II 2000, he would have had to campaign hard for his candidacies in the Pro-Gloria ng Masang Pilipino all over the islands. To improve their chances of winning, he would have had to provide them with enough campaign funds.

If Lozo were running under a parliamentary system in EDSA II 2000, he would have had to campaign hard for his candidacies in the Pro-Gloria ng Masang Pilipino all over the islands. To improve their chances of winning, he would have had to provide them with enough campaign funds.

His party would have won 40 percent of the seats. Afterwards, Lozo would have had to forge a coalition with some of the smaller parties to attain a majority vote. Only then would Lozo get elected prime minister.

All the campaigning and wheeling and dealing would not have been cheaper than under a presidential system.

Jaraula complains that, in the present system, the president has too much power. He controls the legislature power on the prime minister. For example, parliament's budget, approves and spends the national budget. With all that power in his hands, the prime minister is not even elected directly by the people.

Jaraula claims that the opposition will provide the check and balance found in the presidential system. The opposition can never provide check and balance. The majority will always outvote it.

Finally, Jaraula suggest how to achieve what is a parliamentary system would [illegible] of mischief's wipe out corruption in the Philippines because, if a member were corrupt, his constituency will remove him from his post forthwith. At this point of the show, I could see that Hitler Welle would hardly hide her incredulity.

In a survey by an international polling firm, the 22 most corrupt countries in the whole wide world (don't worry, Philippines is not one of them) are: Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Congo, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Laos, Paraguay, Turkmenistan, Somalia, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Angola, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Togo, Sudan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

All these countries are under some form or other of the parliamentary system.

Jaraula thinks the Filipino people if he thinks he can get an national TV and get away with his gigantic hoax. Let us hope that the electorate of Cagayan de Oro City, reborn its representative in Congress, will kick him out in next year's elections.

Fitch expects RP to weather turbulence in Asia markets

By Doris C. Dumlao

LONDON-BASED CREDIT RATING agency Fitch Ratings is not alarmed over the heavy portfolio dividend bounding the Philippines and other Asian emerging markets, saying the turbulence hasn't weakened the underlying credit fundamentals.

So long as the sell-down won't harbour to create propositions, the recent sell-down on emerging markets should not weigh down the Philippine government's capability to service its debts, said James Wei-Leonard, Fitch Ratings' senior director and head of Asia sovereign ratings.

"It shouldn't really affect the ratings because our view is that the markets may have gotten ahead of themselves," McCormick said in an interview at the sidelines of the 41st ACI World Congress hosted by Philippine foreign exchange traders.

"What we're seeing now is a change in risk appetite of investors, we think, and not necessarily a change in fundamentals," McCormick said. "It may turn into something that could affect credit fundamentals but up to now, we haven't seen that."

Over the last three weeks, currencies, bonds and equities in emerging markets like the Philippines were rattled by worries over high inflation in the United States which, in turn, would prompt the earlier-expected tightening in overnight interest rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve.

Many analysts still expect that most of the rate adjustments will be reversed, and that macroeconomic fundamentals in emerging markets would not have changed much to chill the long-run direction of global markets.

"A change in currency or a change in interest rates [is] behind the currencies...they would have to be pretty significant in order to adjust or change the credit fundamentals of a country," McCormick said.

He acknowledged the Philippine government's recent fiscal gains but noted that a change in outlook to "positive" from "stable" was not likely in the immediate future due to lingering concerns over investors over corporate collections.

Meanwhile, most market players are expecting the Philippines and other central banks to tighten monetary settings to stabilize their local currency issues must encounter glossy 1 shift in investors' appetite away from emerging markets.

"Think on a regional basis, some may expect some market hikes, but very gradual," said former Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho. "Some [countries will still be] very concerned about the growth of the economy."

Camacho, vice chair of Credit Suisse's investment banking for emerging markets in Asia, said the current market sentiment was a challenge for countries as it negative interest rate differentials versus offshore investments.

"It's a very, very fine balancing act," he said. "It's very difficult. But I think we will see countries be more aggressive, while some may be more prudent."

In the case of the Philippines, the consensus among investors speakers and other participants at the ACI World Congress is that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas may have to jack up its overnight interest rates by 50 basis points in the second semester.

Asia urged to curb reliance on US for growth

Regional cooperation seen key to progress

By Doris C. Dumlao

ASIA MUST BRACE FOR MORE EXTERNAL shocks by moving toward a new growth paradigm that relies less on US consumption and more on internal strengths and regional cooperation, Philippine Central Bank Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

In a keynote speech before international currency traders at the closing of the 40th ACI World Congress hosted by the Philippines on Saturday, Morrill Lynch chair Steven Wieting said that growing Asia entailed "some dynamics on current growth and development is the next few years" as well-observed global imbalances were making policy adjustments inevitable.

The Philippine initiatives to shore up internal economic fundamentals by reducing reliance on external debts and boosting revenue collections were particularly lauded so as to ample in the right direction.

He said the US's ensuing market was a major driver to the global economy that was now losing momentum, on top of external shocks from skyrocketing oil prices, global recession and concerns over the Asian flu-like.

Asia has benefited enormously over the past few years from the easy availability of credit and in particular the avoidance of American financial excesses spend some of their newfound wealth," Wieting said, noting that Asian central banks had accumulated nearly $2 trillion in reserves through a model to limit currency gaining to the world's biggest economy.

Going forward, he also warned that the full effects of recent oil shocks could adversely affect Asia growth.

"With crises capable at last levels and with prices increasingly driven by supply-side concerns, any future adverse impact is likely to be greater than in the recent past," Wieting said. "We have already seen the beginning of some political concerns about these changing economic dynamics in the form of heightened protectionist trade pressures, particularly in the US."

Protectionist winds

"The vagaries of the American election cycle and the accumulation of sentiment were prominent still likely ensure that these protectionism winds gather pace," he said.

Many see an Asian-led fix and its potential to evolve into something that could be examined and overcome fundamentals to another as well as the threat of global terrorism, some Morrow cloudy that Asia must guard against, he added.

"We are facing new challenges in the global economy and Asia in particular needs to find ways to sustain growth and development without strong consumption growth in the US."

Wieting said that this required a need to stronger internally generated growth in Asia, perhaps combining a lower savings rate and greater resilience for Asian countries to invest in each other.

Establishing such a paradigm would not be easy, Wieting admitted, but stressed that this could kick off with the pillars of regional economic integration provided by the Asian Development Bank during the recent annual meeting in India.

The ADB-supported framework calls for the promotion of cross-border transport and other physical infrastructure and software; trade and investment cooperation among business ventures; regional, monetary and financial collaboration; and cooperation for regional public benefit as well as to coordinate responses to such challenges.

Although 35 percent of Asian trade was now intra-regional, Wieting said Asia must further diversify trade flows away from the United States.

Although the shift toward a monetary union was a tall order as what had happened in the European experience, Wieting suggested that Asia plan to work on an index or basket of Asian currencies that would make it easier to track the movement of these currencies against each other.

Hike in interest rates bane on economy, BSP study says

Rise in reserve requirement to reduce GDP

By Doris C. Dumlao

A HIGHER KEY OVERNIGHT INTERBANK interest rate by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will have the biggest dampening effect on the domestic economy into the long term, according to an internal BSP study.

For every 25-basis-point increase in overnight or reverse repurchase rate, the study said the economy's gross domestic product would be reduced by at least P35.3 million a quarter for the next 12 months and P65.5 million a quarter over the next 24 months.

Overnight rates refer to the interest charged on one-day check-based borrowings from each other, usually to meet reserve requirements.

"A hike in the RRP rate, compared to other changes in reserve requirements and open market operations, is the quarterly GDP (or the largest magnitude in 24 months," it added.

The new study reviewed recently by the Monetary Board also said that an increase in the reserve requirements for banks over the next 12 months would cause the biggest reduction in the country's gross domestic product.

A hike in reserve requirements would mean that the banks will keep more of its cash resources in its vaults, rather than lend it. Its resources are restricted as a result.

"In terms of impact on GDP, a one-percentage-point increase in reserve requirement leads to the greatest amount of reduction in quarterly GDP levels over periods of three and 12 months," the BSP study said.

There were three monetary management tools cited in the study. The overnight borrowing or reverse repurchase (RRP) rate, reserve requirements and outright sale of securities.

Based on the study, the outright sale of securities by the BSP would be the least costly for the economy.

The study was conducted on the basis of a regional meltdown or emerging-market portfolio-assets reappearance of further increases in interest rates by the US Federal Reserve.

The increase in the reserve requirements is seen clearing gross domestic output by P800,000 each quarter in three succeeding months, but the impact would rise to P425 million a quarter over the next 12 months and P66.6 million a quarter over the next 24 months.

On the other hand, the issuance of P1 billion worth of securities to siphon off liquidity, was seen reducing GDP by P2.8 million a quarter over the next 12 months and P4.6 million a quarter over the next 24 months.

In terms of tempering inflation, an increase in the reserve requirement would have the biggest immediate impact of nearly 0.3 percentage point reduction over a three-month period, the study noted.

"However, over a period of one year, a 25-basis point increase in the RRP rate takes precedence over changes in reserve requirement and open market operations," it said.

Overall, a reduction in interest rates would make savings less attractive and borrowing more attractive instead, stimulating spending.

It can also boost the prices of assets such as shares and houses.

But changes in currency rates can also affect the exchange rate.

"An unexpected rise in the rate of interest in the Philippines relative to other countries would give investors a higher return on Philippine assets relative to their foreign currency equivalents, leading to make peso-denominated assets more attractive," the study explained.

"That should raise the value of the peso, reduce exchange rate exposure, and reduce demand for Philippine goods and services abroad," it said.

But the study also said that the impact of interest rates on the exchange rate was "seldom that predictable."

The BSP had recently increased the local bond rates but fallen too low relative to foreign assets.

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Aboitiz group's Unionbank moves closer to taking over iBank assets

By Elizabeth L. Sarmiento

UNION BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES is moving closer to taking over International Exchange Bank as it expects to finish its due diligence by June 5.

Unionbank president Victor Wimmer made the assessment after the bank's stockholders' meeting last Friday.

Unionbank earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with iBank shareholders ITBG Equities Inc., Flamingo Corp., Racon Inc. (Investor Inc., and Greenhills Property Venture) to acquire their combined 67 percent stake in the company.

Unionbank chair Jaime Ortiz said earlier that he sees no hitches in the proposed merger with iBank.

Ortiz had said minority shareholders could no longer make a counter-offer as the majority shareholders have already agreed to sell their stake to Unionbank.

"We just have to deal with the rest of the shareholders either through individual agreement or a tender offer but the agreement is binding," Ortiz said.

"Those who will not accept a such offer at P42.30 will just have to accept a share swap which will be the consequence of the merger," he added.

Both president Simon Ho, meanwhile, who was not among those who signed the MOA, owns around 1 percent.

Unionbank director Jaime Ongsiako, meanwhile, said a merger with iBank was a "perfect fit."

"We think it's a good bank with good people roaming it. It's a perfect fit in terms of culture and philosophy," Ongsiako said in reverse.

Unionbank will be the surviving entity of the merger, which will make Unionbank the 7th largest bank in asset size and branch network and the 6th largest in deposits.

Unionbank currently runs 111 branches, while iBank has 80.

Ortiz admitted that Unionbank was behind to gain for the third largest bank by 2010.

"So we have to fast track things," he said, adding that Unionbank is still open to new acquisitions.

Acquisition of 67 percent in iBank would require roughly P4 billion.

"Capital raising is a possibility but there is nothing in the books. It depends on the opportunities," Valdepeña said.

He also said Unionbank aims to grow its net profit this year by 5 to 10 percent from 2005, driven by both interest and non-interest income.

Mirant ups profit in Q1

By Abigail L. Ho

ATLANTA-BASED MIRANT CORP., parent firm of the country's largest independent power producer Mirant Philippines Corp., registered a huge net income jump in the first quarter to $407 million from only $11 million in the same period last year.

Adjusted net income, on the other hand, was placed at $192 million. This excluded unrealized mark-to-market gains of $216 million, plus other nonrecurring charges, mainly a $90 million gain on the sale of assets.

Adjusted earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization, a measure of cash flow, reached $340 million in the first three months of the year.

The $173-million jump in adjusted EBITDA, as compared with the January-March period in 2005, was attributed mainly to higher realized margins from hedging activities by the company's business in the United States.

"Our hedging strategy has been effective. We are substantially hedged for the year, which has produced more predictable financial results mitigating milder weather experienced across much of the US during the quarter," Mirant chair and chief executive officer Edward Muller said.

Operating cash flow was pegged at $300 million, an amount already adjusted for bankruptcy payments.

As of end-March, Mirant had cash and cash equivalents of $1.74 billion.

Mirant Philippines chair, president and chief executive Jose Lorenzo Jr. said Mirant's strong performance would also provide a huge boost to the company's business in the Philippines.

"These are very good numbers posted by our parent company. This motivates the Philippine business unit to work more effectively and efficiently to meet our goals for our stakeholders and targets for the year," he said in a statement over the weekend.

Mirant Philippines accounts for almost 60 percent of its parent firm's EBITDA.

The PP owns and operates some of the biggest power plants in the country, including the 1,200-MW Sual coal-fired plant in Pangasinan and the 700-MW Ilijan gas-fired power plant facility in Batangas.

It also has a stake in the 1,200-MW Ilijan gas-fired power plant in Batangas.

Mirant's total capacity in the country now stands at 2,200 MW.

Mindanao wants to be known as halal center of RP

DAVAO CITY — [illegible] Mindanao declared the country's capital for halal food and processed consumer products.

Halal pertains to foods or goods prepared in accordance with Islamic laws. Muslims do not eat food or use products laced with pork or anything perceived as unclean.

Mike Jabauw Arnold, corporate sales manager for Bisdak of the Philippine Islands (BPI), said the bank was eager to know when Mindanao would be considered the country's halal center.

"We want to know what are the requirements guidelines or rules for Mindanao to be considered as such," Arnold said.

Arnold said the income from halal products produced in Mindanao could be as high as $250 billion a year.

He said almost two Middle East countries and other areas where there are sizable Muslim population for halal products produced in Mindanao.

"We are expecting to gain $20 billion from the world market," he said.

Arnold, also chair of the Mindanao Business Association, said the business community has discussed the need for the declaration of Mindanao as the country's halal capital.

He said another meeting, which would involve chief executives and finance officers of various corporations, royal banks, aquaculture and agricultural firms, would be held here on June 9.

Bangko Sentral Gov. Amando Tetangco was expected to attend the meeting, which was also aimed at pushing the so-called Mindanao Business Agenda.

"After the series of conferences, all achievable issues such as information technology, rubber and coconut, seaweeds, coming and shipping rail, be integrated and incorporated into a package (lobbied) as the Mindanao Business Agenda," Arnold said. Jodie B. Alparaque, PID Mindanao Bureau

Unilever to tap halal mart

Mayonnaise may soon be sold to Malaysia

By Roland W. Dizenlago

FOOD AND PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS maker Unilever Philippines Inc. is set on tapping the multibillion-dollar Islamic halal market through its mayonnaise products.

"We are very keen on halal and we hope to find a solution and be able to start by next year," said Unilever chief executive Howard R. Balfron.

Balfron said, however, that the cost of factory adjustments was one of the main reasons why the company was taking its time on the matter.

"We need about P10-million per production line that would be isolated from elements that would make the product not acceptable to the Muslim market," Balfron said. "But going into that is not hard to integrate into what we have."

Halal is an Arabic word generally translated as "permissible" and, in relation to consumables, refers to products that Muslims are allowed to consume and drink in the observance of Islam.

Unilever sells a product line of mayonnaise that comes in cans, chicken and pork flavors—the latter prohibited among Muslims.

The global halal food industry is said to account for about $100 billion in investment a year.

Balfron said the immediate market for Unilever's halal mayonnaise would be Malaysia, where the firm already exports its other products.

"That would be a taste more than going into the Indonesian market where we are less established and where competition would pose greater challenges," Balfron added.

In a separate interview, Abdul Rasman PTI Lanang, president of the Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines, [illegible], said he may make those 600 Philippines was also interested in having its products certified halal.

IDCP is on for the only halal-certifying body in the country recognized by renowned international agencies such as the Islamic Food Nutrition Council.

Lanang said both Unilever and Rasa began talks with IDCP in 2000 to know more about the requirements of halal certification.

"Unilever officials told us that if it is successful with mayonnaise, (Unilever) would consider having its other food products halal-certified," Lanang said.

Further, he said that even aside arguments by non-Muslim readers to Islam can [illegible] mayonnaise because of its components, halal means high quality in terms of food preparation and nutritional value.

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites qualified manufacturers/dealers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the property as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Deadline/Opening of Bids	Bid Security (5%)
50 units Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) Four (4) Year Maintenance Package	P10,000,000.00	June 6, 2006 9:00 a.m.	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P500,000.00
4,000 bag Continuous Forms (CF) Rolls	P 1,000,000.00	June 6, 2006 9:00 a.m.	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P50,000.00
Various Forms for Printing (Special Items for Expenses Vouchers)	P 2,000,000.00	June 6, 2006 9:00 a.m.	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P100,000.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting May 23, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at 23/F Conference Room, 2344 Pres. LAGMAN Plaza, 1550-M Lt. del Pilar St., Manila, Manila.

Bids should be valid for (90) days and submitted together with the duly accomplished Bid Forms/Price Schedules, Bid Security and other documents as specified in the Bid Data Sheet in the aforementioned address.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat, Management Division at telephone nos. 551-5000 local 6466, 6465, 6464 & 6462.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to waive any defect therein, in order to protect quality, efficiency and economy, acting solely in the interest of the Bank.

(SGD.) DANILO S. CASTAÑARES
BAC Chairman

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Deadline/Opening of Bids	Bid Security (5%)
100 pcs. Passbook Printers	P 1,000,000.00	June 6, 2006 1:30 pm	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P 50,000.00
1 set Supply and Delivery of Air-Conditioning Units (ACU) Systems	P 750,000.00	June 6, 2006 1:30 pm	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P 37,500.00
1 lot Supply and Delivery of Security Envelopes	P 1,000,000.00	June 6, 2006 1:30 pm	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P 50,000.00
1 lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of Window Grills (Custom Fabrication)	P 1,000,000.00	June 6, 2006 1:30 pm	June 13, 2006 1:30 PM	P 50,000.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting May 30, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at 23/F Conference Room, 2344 Pres. LAGMAN Plaza, 1550-M Lt. del Pilar St., Manila, Manila.

The bidders shall have their duly accomplished eligibility requirements documents and Technical proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the above-mentioned address.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat, Management Division at telephone nos. 551-5000 local 6466, 6465, 6464 & 6462.

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(SGD.) DANILO S. CASTAÑARES
BAC Chairman

Chinese firms looking for land in Mindanao

By Christine S. Cayliran

A GROUP OF CHINESE BUSINESSMEN is keen on developing some 4,000 hectares of land in Zamboanga Sibugay in Mindanao, which will entail some P5.4 billion in investments, an industry official said.

Emilio Ilo, chair of the Philippine Rubber Industry Association, said Chinese investors were looking at land suitable for growing rubber in China unless to export its growing demand for natural rubber.

Now the world's largest rubber consumer, China imports one million metric tons (MT) of natural rubber a year for the manufacture of motor vehicle tires, shoes, disposable surgical and industrial gloves, the said.

He, however, refused to divulge the name of the Chinese companies and agreements have been signed.

Industry estimates showed that investments in growing rubber range from P90,000 to P1.25 million a hectare.

Zamboanga Sibugay is home to the second oldest rubber plantation in the Philippines, the oldest being in Basilan, Isabela.

There are 2,000 hectares of abandoned land planted to around 50,000 rubber trees in Zamboanga Sibugay, easily overtaking the 27,000 and 25,000 trees produced in Cotabato and Basilan, respectively.

Ilo said the country's rubber industry is "still compromised because the record price of raw rubber replied jumped more than 300 percent to an average of $1,000 per metric ton from $300 last year," said Vicente Calvo, president of the Bhold Agricultural Corp.—owner of the remaining rubber plantation in the country.

This has prompted farmers to produce more of the commodity this year, he said.

The Philippines is the 12th largest rubber producer in the world.

Of the 60,000 metric tons of rubber produced last year, 40,000 metric tons went to the export market, according to the Department of Agriculture.

The leading markets for Philippine rubber are China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore.

Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation
South Luzon Operation and Maintenance

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Replacement of 10.35 km. Pandan-Tayabas Branch 69-kv. 4/0cu-Wasp Aluminum (23.47 Transmission Line 1 & 2 (From Tabo No. 20 to1, Tabo No. 11 (M)

(BRANCH ELIGIBILITY CLEARANCE)

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO) through the Luzon Operation and Maintenance Group (LOMG) intends to apply the proceeds of the Loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) Loan No. PH-P-[illegible] and/or the Philippine Government Counterpart Fund (GCF) to cover the cost of the Replacement of 10.35 km. Pandan-Tayabas Branch 69-kv. 4/0cu-Wasp Aluminum (23.47 Transmission Line 1 & 2 (From Tabo No. 20 to1, Tabo No. 11 (M) and other related expenses and to undertake the Project.

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO) now invites pre-qualified contractors to submit sealed bids of their lowest and most responsive bid for the Replacement of 10.35 km. Pandan-Tayabas Branch 69-kv. 4/0cu-Wasp Aluminum (23.47 Transmission Line 1 & 2 (From Tabo No. 20 to1, Tabo No. 11 (M) and other related expenses and to undertake the Project. Only pre-qualified contractors under the Category A & C, Specialization "Construction of Transmission Lines" from the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) are invited to bid.

Interested pre-qualified contractors may obtain further information from the NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO) at the Bid Secretariat, Technical Management Office, 2nd Floor, Transco Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City and may purchase the bidding documents for a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) starting May 29, 2006 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and on June 30, 2006.

It is required that all bidding documents must be purchased by Bidders that intend to participate in the bidding. Bidders who have purchased the bidding documents will be notified through fax transmission of any addenda that may be issued. Bidders who have not purchased the bidding documents will not be notified of any addenda. The Bidding Documents shall be sold to the Bidders on a non-refundable basis for the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00). The Bidding Documents may be purchased by the Bidder or his authorized representative upon presentation of his Authorization Letter.

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO) will conduct the bid conference open to all Bidders on June 20, 2006, 9:00 A.M. at the LOMG Conference Room, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of bids is on June 30, 2006 at 9:00 A.M. at the address below. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form and amount stipulated in the Bidding Documents, valid for a period of 120 days. The opening shall be on the same date, June 30, 2006, 9:00 A.M. at the LOMG Conference Room 2/F of Transco Building. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO) reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(SGD.) DANILO S. CASTAÑARES
(Chairman)

Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation
South Luzon Operation and Maintenance

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Substitution of 5.2km Balagtas-Bulacan DP
69-kV Transmission Line (Phase 1)

The proponent project is located in Barangays Panasahan, Dolores, Magsaysay, Tabang, Sta. Ines, Sta. Cruz, Sta. Rosa, Sta. Rita, Sta. Clara, Sta. Maria, Sta. Monica, Sta. Barbara, Sta. Lucia, Sta. Magdalena, Sta. Isabel, Sta. Teresa, Sta. Victoria, Sta. Ana, Sta. Elena, Sta. Cecilia, Sta. Agnes

CURE told to roll out its own 3G network

By Dante L. Lucas

STARTUP MOBILE PHONE FIRM CURE Electricity Unlimited Resources Enterprise Inc. (CURE) must first roll out its own third-generation (3G) network in line with the commitment to supplement before it can hope to ride on the network owned of its competitors, according to regulators.

The statement was made by National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) Commissioner Ronald O. Solis last week, in reaction to CURE's plan to piggyback on the 3G network infrastructure of industry giants Smart Telecommunications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc.

In an interview with reporters, Solis said that while the 3G guidelines issued by the NTC allows for the so-called "co-location" of facilities, CURE must first show its commitment to the business by putting up its initial telecommunications infrastructure.

"The concept of co-location is only for (geographical) areas where it does not make sense to have a duplication of facilities," he said.

Solis reiterated his stand that the government may consider new entrants to multiple bandwidths to service a limited number.

"In that case, the companies are co-locators," he said, adding that it will be up to the telecommunications firms to discuss among themselves the price that they would charge competitors for the "rental" of the 3G infrastructure.

So far, Smart and Globe have begun an aggressive rollout program aimed at dominating the local 3G market.

However, Globe-operated Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc. and CURE—owned by former Trade Minister Roberto V. Ongpin—are taking their time in implementing their own 3G projects, preferring instead to watch from the sidelines as their competitors take the lead.

Earlier, CURE president Erwin G. Bocobo said the company's plan called for co-location of facilities only in competitive areas of its business territory.

The NTC chief said he saw nothing wrong with the plan, as long as the company doesn't infringe on the rights of other telecommunications providers.

"If you're able to show the NTC that you're compliant [with the 3X rollout plan], we'll even help talk into the network sharing among the companies," Solis said.

For his part, Bocobo assured the NTC that CURE is not reluctant to meet its commitment with the telecommunications regulator.

"We intend to roll out. Based on the schedule we've submitted to them," he said. "We are in the middle of our marketing process for the first phase of our roll out."

CURE has long been rumored to be allying itself with Hong Kong-based Telecommunications powerhouse Hutchison Whampoa for its "giant 3G" frontier model, although it has yet to make a formal announcement on this matter.

The commission is set to examine the bid terms of Smart, Globe, Digitel and CURE to evaluate their compliance with the terms and conditions set out when their licenses were awarded late last year.

INVITATION TO BID FOR MANPOWER SERVICES

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2. Audited financial statements in good financial standing for the last (3) years.
3. Government permits and licenses: DTI, SEC, DOLE

Above requirements must be submitted on or before **June 2, 2006.**

A Pre-bid Conference shall be held for all qualified bidders at a date to be announced later.

Submit requirements and all inquiries to:

MR. NOEL TIRO
Design and Bidding Officer
8th Floor, UCPB Head Office Bldg., Makati Avenue, Makati City
Tel. No. 811-9912

UCPB

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation
Republic of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS CABLES

PB2005-20-TC(SP-NC) PB-ICC-M-0082(NC)

1. The [illegible] (TRANSCO) now invites bids (Supply and Delivery of Various Cables, Delivery of the GOCCP is required within sixty (60) calendar days from the receipt of the approved Contract Documents / Notice to Proceed of the eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents. TIN

2. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of [illegible] Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to cooperatives or associations of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the members are citizens of the Philippines, pursuant to Republic Act (RA) 8435, [illegible] Act (AFMA) Modernization Act (RA) 9136, Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) and other laws. The prospective bidder must be eligible to participate in the bidding in accordance with Section 23.4.1 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9184. Bidders should have the capacity to supply and deliver the equipment in accordance with the requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who has demonstrated to satisfy during the post-qualification procedure.

3. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below from May 30, 2006 to June 23, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php 1,000.00. The method of payment will be in Cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidders or his authorized representative.

4. The TRANSCO's [illegible] of the Bid Submission agency or its authorized agents on June 27, 2006 1:30 P.M. at the address below.

5. Bids are eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before June 27, 2006 10:00 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following forms and amount in accordance pursuant to existing convertible currency Like Bids shall not be accepted:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount of Bid Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%) or PhP 38,75
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%) or PhP[illegible]
3. Surety bond	Two percent (2%) or PhP[illegible]
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%) or PhP 114,8

7. Bid opening shall be on June 27, 2006 10:00 AM in the Bidders' Conference Room, Quezon Avenue corner, Diliman, Quezon City. All bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend the address below.

8. The National Transmission Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation Head Office Project
[illegible]
[illegible]
Quezon City
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Fax No. 922-1010
Website: www.transco.ph

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Article continued on B9

to, Ickstadt said.

In our proposed economy package, for example, the basic franchise voice service monthly fee would be set at P800 for each detailed subscriber. The basic monthly fee remains subject to the currency exchange rate adjustment, or CERA, mechanism.

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For economy plan subscribers who subscribe to either PLDT Fibr Internet dial up service or PLDT DSL broadband Internet service, they will be charged an incremental fee or fixed per month on top of the basic fixed line voice service fee.

In addition, fee to bring PLDT fibre per month rates or the applicable PLDT DSL monthly fees will be charged.

Packaging firm defaults on debts, say banks

Steniel's creditors mulling over foreclosure of assets

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CREDITOR BANKS LED BY Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Chinatrust Commercial Bank and Bank of the Philippine Islands have declared packaging firm Steniel Manufacturing Corp. (Steniel) "in default" of debts worth at least P900 million.

According to sources in the banking, the creditors are now reviewing their options, which may include foreclosing on Steniel's assets or going into negotiations to find other ways by which the company can repay its debts.

The decision last Friday tried to reach Steniel's office in Cavite but was told that there were no officials present at the time.

This development came about shortly after the company announced the management buyout of shares in its parent firm.

Steniel (Belgium) Holdings SA sold its 100 percent stake in Steniel (Netherlands) Holdings BV to certain directors and officers of the publicly listed firm.

Since Steniel Netherlands owns 82.5 percent of Steniel, the sale has in effect, placed the real ownership of Steniel into the hands of the local management, sources said.

Steniel Belgium is the holding company owned by Europe and Asia investors advisory firm CVC Capital Partners Asia Pacific LP and Asia Investors LLC.

Steniel however said it is in distance that while the parties involved in the deal have signed a share purchase agreement, the shares of the Dutch holding firm have not been transferred in the buyers pending completion of various requirements.

Steniel told the Philippine Stock Exchange that Steniel Belgium's sale of shares was conditioned to order to give directors and officers of the local firm more flexibility in the operations and management of the business.

Banking sources however said that the Belgian firm simply wanted out.

The sources also said that the announced deal shocked creditor since they received a formal offer in January from Steniel Belgium proposing to sell its shares to them.

The offer did not carry a deadline. Between January and May, creditors claimed they were looking for an investor to take over the shares, which they planned to purchase from Steniel Belgium.

Steniel has three manufacturing plants located in Cavite, Cebu and Davao. It manufactures paper products, paper board and corrugated fiberboard containers.

Steniel technically has been in default for the last two years. But creditors said they waited to overlook that technicality since there had been discussions on how to settle the debts through a share purchase. Later, it was agreed that the firm would be turned over to an international investor.

In October 2003, Metro Pacific Corp. and Philippine International Paper Corp. sold their combined 72.6 percent in Steniel to Steniel Netherlands.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
The oldest man on the left waits for his companion, paraplegic Enriquito Bangin, to finish filling up a job application form from job orientation Bangin hopes to repair cellular phones someday. Persons with disabilities who are looking for work are provided pre-employment counseling, psychological services during a job fair at the Occupational Safety and Health Center in Quezon City.

ADB scraps $200-M currency swap with RP

By Michelle V. Rerra

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT Bank said the proposed $200-million currency swap arrangement with the Philippine government would no longer push through after both parties failed to agree on the terms of the deal.

"There is no more currency swap deal," ADB country director Thomas Gronch told reporters. "The ADB has withdrawn the offer."

The currency swap arrangement, which was never approved by the central bank's Monetary Board, was proposed in 2003 supposedly to provide the government cheaper source of foreign currency, thus reducing the cost of paying the country's external debts.

Under the proposal, the ADB would issue dollar-denominated bonds, the proceeds from which would be swapped for peso with the Philippine government.

The dollars were supposed to help beef up the government's foreign currency holdings at cheaper cost, while the pesos received by the ADB were translated for relending to domestic banks.

Gronch did not identify the terms of the deal that the ADB and the Philippine government failed to agree on, but officials from the Department of Finance earlier said they were hoping the ADB would lower the cost of the deal.

Authorities would not disclose the cost entailed in the proposed arrangement, but the DOF said the cost for the government would only be similar to commercial rates.

Negotiations over the terms of the agreement dragged on since 2004. Last week, ADB finally declared that the proposed swap arrangement was dead.

The currency swap deal between the Philippines and the ADB would have been the first for both parties. When discussions over the swap arrangements were still in their initial stages, the ADB had said it might establish similar deals with other countries.

Other lending firms, including the World Bank, were reported to have been monitoring the developments of the proposed currency swap arrangement for possible entry into similar deals.

Gronch said the deal has already been canceled. Gronch said the ADB was willing to provide more official development assistance to the Philippines given the country's improving fiscal situation.

"The government's fiscal position is improving as things are looking brighter for IMF-ED to be able to expand our engagement, he said.

The ADB is the country's second-largest source of debt, after the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

BOI grants tax perks to Smart's ₱33.18-B 3G project

By Rosand N. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS has granted tax perks to telecommunications giant Smart Communications Inc. for its P33.18-billion third-generation cellular mobile phone project.

BOI had earlier approved the similar project of Globe Telecom, for which it intends to spend P9.48 billion.

According to the BOI, Smart's investment was given priority status due to the huge amounts involved.

A priority status means Smart is qualified for a six-year tax holiday duty-free importation of capital goods and other fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

Smart plans to raise 61 percent of the required funds from stockholder equity and the rest through borrowings.

The 3G project would create 107 new jobs and is expected to start commercial operations in July.

Based on the company's applications, Smart expects its 3G subscriber base to grow steadily from half a million in the project's first year to 8.6 million by the sixth year.

In the same period, revenues are expected to grow from P900 million to P28.1 billion while capital expenditures, which would depend on actual subscriber take up, is seen to reach an average of P5.49 billion a year.

Smart plans to make available its 3G services starting with Metro Manila—especially the central business district, airports, malls and hotels—and Cebu and Davao as well as popular tourist spots.

The service would then gradually reach out to capital cities and towns in the provinces and then to other cities and towns.

In January, the National Telecommunications Commission assigned Smart its three 3G frequency bands that the firm said would help hasten its delivery of 3G services to the public.

3G technology and services would allow users to hear and see the party they are transacting...both here and abroad—search television shows and enjoy faster Internet connection while mobile.

Company officials have said that frequency bands that they asked for—1920-1935 MegaHertz and 2110-2125 MHz—had the least amount of interference and was located at the best position in the 3G frequency spectrum.

They said there would allow for the clearest possible voice transmission.

Other companies preparing their 3G systems are Digital Telecommunications Philippines and Connectivity Unlimited Resources Enterprise.

By raising fees, PCA gets to hike income by ₱100M a year

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINE COCONUT AUTHORITY (PCA) has announced plans to increase its levy by six centavos per kilo which will, in effect, jack up its income by P100 million a year.

PCA Administrator Oscar Garin said that the levy would raise its 12 centavos for every kilo of coconut oil exported. The proceeds would be used to augment the agency's funds.

"We obtained the go-signal from the Department of Finance to increase our levy by six centavos, so long as there is a program to be implemented for its utilization," Garin said.

He added that the PCA would conduct consultations with industry leaders before implementing it.

Local oil millers—members of the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (Unoil) and the Philippine Coconut Oil Producers Association (Pcopa)—are questioning the fee increase at a time when a supply glut in the world market has pulled down coconut oil prices.

"We hope they should reconsider our proposal to consultations before they implement the fee hike," according to an industry official. "It would be untimely at this time."

The finance department favored the increase in PCOA's favor, on condition that seven members of the Department of Agriculture should be implemented.

According to letter from DOF undersecretary Gil S. Beltran dated April 7, the fee increase would be allowed under certain conditions.

The DOF said that a program for the development of the Philippine coconut industry must be established and this should focus on the upgrading of small coconut farmers' socioeconomic status.

"There must be an approval by the DA of the PCA program and detailed outcomes to be funded by the 6-centavos increase," the DOF said.

The DOF also warned that there is a pending case before a Quezon City Regional Trial Court against the PCA filed by the Pcopa regarding the hike in PCA fees.

Transco concession bid set for September

By Raquel L. Ito

BIDDING FOR THE 25-YEAR NATIONAL Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession may finally take place in September, following two failed auctions in 2003, and a negotiated bid in 2004 which the government eventually scrapped.

According to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), interested investors have until mid-July to submit their expressions of interest. The transaction documents for the auction are already available.

Only companies that will pre-qualify will be allowed to participate in the actual bidding in September.

To pre-qualify, a potential bidder should have a member or affiliate with a net asset value or market capitalization of at least $500 million.

They also have to have a member or affiliate "with sufficient experience in operating and maintaining electricity transmission systems comparable to that of the Philippines, with at least 6,000 circuit kilometers and a minimum 5,000 megawatts peak demand and a voltage level of 115 kilovolts (kV) to 230 kV."

An interested foreign firm, they have to enter into partnerships with Filipino entities to establish the consortium to qualify in the bidding.

The $500-million market capitalization was set to optimize the Transco system and to ensure the commitment of investors interested in bidding for the transmission company, including its operations and maintenance," PSALM president Steven Cuasia said in a statement.

Apart from the technical and financial qualifications, interested bidders should also comply with the RA 9136, or Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, mandate that they should not have any interest in electricity generation, distribution or supply, whether directly or indirectly.

Cuasia said the upcoming auction had a bigger chance of success than the past ones, due mainly to certain "significant developments."

The latest one there was greater regulatory certainty now, with the Energy Regulatory Commission's requested release of Transco's regulated asset base (RAB) on June 16.

The RAB will be the basis for Transco's transmission wheeling allowable revenues, which will determine the transmission wheeling rates, the main source of revenue for the Transco concessionaire.

In an earlier interview, Cuasia and several foreign firms were eyeing the Transco concession, including a Canadian firm and some investors firms.

"The details, who have left before, are now reconsidering," she said.

BSP sees end to disturbances in peso bond market

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE TURBULENCE IN THE LOCAL PESO bond market that has spooked several investors of unit investment trust funds in turn tapering off, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. ruled out panic selling for the BSP to open a liquidity window for Philippine UITFs, which had been adversely affected by the global meltdown on units of emerging markets over the last three months.

"The market can very well take care of itself. The fundamentals are the driving of the 450s RCI World Congress on Saturday. "What happened over the last few days was abnormal as its expected that things would get back to normal."

Money market traders said intervention by the Bureau of Treasury through the buying of five-year and 10-year Treasury bonds, which were mostly the underlying assets of UITFs, had helped stabilize the markets. However, some traders warned of moral hazards arising from such interventions.

Espenilla also noted that the BSP likewise had enough monetary tools to stand off speculation, not just in the foreign exchange but in local bond interest rates as well.

"The exchange rate is the price of our currency expressed in foreign exchange terms," Espenilla said. "Interest is another price of our money expressed in time value.

"Our basic mandate is to maintain price stability. Under its normal mandate, if there's excess volatility in key price variables, the BSP has options to maintain order in the market."

The BSP has assured banks against overselling UITFs, or pooled trust funds in acceptable currencies operated by a trust entity.

Under the common trust funds, these funds are exempted from reserve requirements as they are independent from the bank proper.

They continually reflect underlying market values.

"It's an option for the BSP to increase authority to maintain financial stability and to use it to open market tools to curb excess volatility in currency rates," Espenilla said.

However, Espenilla declined to say whether the BSP had actually exercised such options to keep bank peso funds over the last few days.

While government intervention had helped stabilize the local bond markets, some market players warned of the adverse impact of excessive interference.

"I'm very much against any form of intervention because [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas] treasurer Ed Buted said. "There's done most based based in that."

"Imagine investors coming in [UITFs] and expecting they would be bailed out when things go wrong," Buted added. "Maybe [the government] ... shouldn't have allowed the foreign notes to come down too low in the first place."

Across the region, recent dramatic moves have brought emerging market assets back to more attractive levels.

"The markets' correction has mixed in some of the excesses—in metals, gold and emerging debt...and economic stabilizers have kicked in, [in the form of] lower bond yields, weaker foreign exchange rates, which will cut exports and imports," Espenilla said. Espenilla said in a commentary sent out for sales.

Asian and major markets had stabilized last week and the sell-offs were more of a technical correction rather than the beginning of a prolonged bear market.

"We don't expect very the global environment which contributed to the sharp deterioration in global risk appetite in the past few weeks will set go away in a hurry," Jones said.

"The global upswing is also in mid-cycle stage, when capacity is tightening and there is pressure for inflation to deteriorate, as is brilliantly as outperform the upside," Jones said. "Investors continuing to love about growth, inflation and the dollar will keep volatility high."

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Department of Labor and Employment
National Wages and Productivity Commission
REGIONAL TRIPARTITE WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY BOARD
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing on the matter of minimum wage adjustment in the National Capital Region is hereby set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board – National Capital Region (RTWPB-NCR) on 21 June 2006, 1:00 p.m., at the Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC), OSHC Complex, North Avenue cor. Science Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

All interested parties who wish to present their position/ opposition on the matter are hereby enjoined to attend the public hearing and may file their position papers with the Board on or before the scheduled date of hearing at the RTWPB-NCR Secretariat, Room 11-C, 11th Floor, G.E. Antonino Building, cor. T.M. Kalaw & J. Bocobo Streets, Ermita, Manila, or send through telefax number 527-51-55 or at email address: wage_ncr@yahoo.com

(SGD.) RICARDO S. MARTINEZ SR., CESO III
Regional Board Chairman

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of
Our Dearly Beloved
Sisenando "Andoy" Rivera Dimaliwat

Peacefully joined our Lord and his wife **Candelaria G. Dimaliwat** on May 26, 2006 at the age of 78.

His children **Bernardo** and **Rolelia**, **Roberto** and **Noemi Celerina**, **Edgardo** and **Mary Rose**, **Belinda** and **Asuncio**, **Renato** and **Irene**, sister Ms. Socorro and grandchildren request the prayers readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Nativa Chapel, La Funeraria Paz Sucat Avenue Manila Memorial Park Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, May 31, 2006 at 9:00 AM at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

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OBITUARIES

RUFINO CO

Passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on May 26, 2006 at the age of 77.

His loving wife **Uai Ue Lam**, *children* **Liang Seng**, **Juanita Carolina**, **Magnet**, **Rosalie**, *Daughters-in-law* **Rolando Sanico**, **Deborah Tang**, *Sons-in-law* **Johnson Ngo** / **Ti Tin Chong Ng**, **Philmon Ty**, *grandchildren, brother & sisters, nephew & nieces, relatives and friends request to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.*

His remains will lie in state at the Funeraria Paz Manila, Chapel I.

Interment will be on May 31, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. Cremation will follow at the Chinese Cemetery.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

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In Loving Memory of
Crescencia Pamintuan-Rolda
September 17, 1922 – May 26, 2006
Died in the peace of the Lord on May 26, 2006 at 8:00 p.m.
Beloved wife of the late Dr. Pantaleon Rolda

Her bereaved children **Rodrigo** & **Rosalind Santos**, **Diana Maria**, **Ana Maria** and **Elizabeth** and **Victor de los Santos** her niece **Angelina Wade**, nephews **Gerardo** and **Bernardo Reyes**, her grandchildren **Lourdes**, **PJ**, **Pig-ou Lacsina**, **Betsy Landas**, **Ani Umaga** and other relatives request the prayers readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel I, in Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, May 30, 2006 at 3:30 p.m. at Manila Memorial Park – Parañaque after the 3:00 p.m. funeral mass at the Loyola Memorial, Espejo in Guadalupe.

People, Events & Products

Volvo rolls on to Cebu

PALAZZO MOTORS CEBU (MBS) (07) formally launched Volvo Cebu when it opened its showroom doors last April 22, in Mandaue City. The orbeda days affair opened with the official inauguration and blessing in the morning followed by the motorcade ribbon-cutting ceremony officiated by Ron, Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, Volvo Car Asia Pacific regional business director Jack Zaal, along with Volvo Manila officers here their support to the new addition in the Volvo stable. Among the guests of honor are Cebu Bilaya Tomas Osmeña and Mandaue City Councilor Glen Rotoras.

To celebrate the entrance of Volvo in the region, guests enjoyed a night of pure energy and celebration as the big unveiling of Volvo ensued. The celebration revolved around the fresh new look and outlook of Volvo. Gone were the long edges and instead replaced by sleek lines and even sexier curves of the humble automotive fleet. Spearheading the pack is three of the most vibrant models available, the sizable Volvo S60 compact sedan, the robust Volvo XC70 Cross Country, and the award-winning Volvo S40, the XC90. These models pack a mighty punch with varying degrees of performance that better cater to each of their fans. These spirited Volvos sported out style and sublimant others they entered the limelight with three of Cebu's most driven personalities, motorist entrepreneur Francis Libarnes, Zee columnist Leigh Cariel and sportsman Glen Sorio.

Dancing to the automotive beat seen for 22 years, a renowned for its smarter innovations Volvo's unique focus is one of the top automotive manufacturers in the country has inspired the people behind the corporation to work together and pool their ideas to build a company that creates a customer-oriented product. Backed by a reliable partnership with the sole distributor and authorized dealer of Volvo cars in the Philippines, Viking Cars International, Palazzo has been ventured further to provide for the needs of the fast growing premium car market in Cebu and other Visayan cities, and makes available to the market one of the world's most safe and dynamic cars – Volvo.

The new Volvo Cebu showroom exudes the quality one would expect from a premium car manufacturer. One sees artisanal Volvo's unique lines and distinctive lettings, evident in every design detail from the lights, bright spot areas, with white as the dominant color. In the natural warmth seen and through the use of lightwood. The showroom reflects beautiful functionality central to the Volvo design philosophy. Nothing is lavish or excessive, but confident, understated and considered. Ultimately, Volvo creates an environment that is so relaxing and rewarding as behind the wheel of their cars. The experience inside Volvo Cebu showcases a line-up of cars that exude quiet to give people the luxury to live each moment to the fullest about life.

A lot more is in store for Cebu and other neighboring regions as Volvo rolls on to bring automotive excellence and customer service in this part of the country. Along with cohesive offerings such as the pre-owned and accessory facilities, Volvo hopes to have more options to cater their decision to purchase a Volvo. With the support of the Volvo Manila office, the official distributor of Volvo cars in the Philippines, Viking Cars Inc. (VCI) corporate establishment in Pampanga that sets its considerable footprint and strengthen the Volvo brand in the Queen City of the South.

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SF Chronicle offers podcast for Filipinos

Erwin Oliva
Contributor

ANOTHER FILIPINO-ORIENTED podcast has emerged, this time from US-based newspaper San Francisco Chronicle.

The podcast, dubbed Pinoy Pod, is a weekly program that features interviews, news and information about the Filipino experience in Northern California and the Philippines, according to the US newspaper's website.

People can download or listen to the Pinoy Pod at www.sfgate.com/blogs/podcasts.

A podcast is a radio show that one can listen to or downloaded from the Internet. It can be played on one's computer or downloaded to a portable digital music player, such as the popular iPod.

The first episode highlights Jesse Andal's rendition of the Star Spangled Banner in Filipino, and the subsequent interview with him on why he translated the American anthem into Filipino.

The first episode also features the reasons Filipinos need to remember Rizal. Meriam Soliman also uses the Filipino culture as basis for his sketches.

The podcast episodes are mainly in English but the Filipino language will in the future be used in reach more Filipinos, the podcast's proponents said.

Pinoy Pod is a product of the San Francisco Chronicle's Filipino Journalists. There are deputy managing editor Leslie Guevarra, editorial writer and columnist Jon Bohlver, podcast producer Jenny Rompalpis, features reporter and Pinoy Pod producer Ben Pimentel, reporter Cleave Estrella and copy editor Michelle Lesley.

Pinoy Pod will include topics on arts, culture, entertainment, business and political and social issues. It will run from 10 to 20 minutes, and will be uploaded every Tuesday.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, this is the first time a major American newspaper is offering a podcast for Filipinos.

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BUSINESS Monday

Marinduque: RP's butterfly capital

Pupa and deadstock export estimated at ₱100 million

By Gerald Gem R. Quirobe
INQUIRER Luzon Bureau

BOAC, MARINDUQUE—Unknown to many, the island-province of Marinduque is considered the Butterfly Capital of the Philippines, contributing 85 percent of the country's butterfly and pupa exports.

More than three-fourths of the butterfly breeders nationwide are based in this province.

Butterfly farming started only recently but is fast becoming an international growth industry with estimates of P100 million worth of Philippine exports.

Worldwide, the market is estimated at $200 million.

Framed crafts

Prof. Emma Cubillo of the Marinduque State College (MSC), says the butterfly industry in Marinduque started 10 years ago.

From a single-farmed project in the '90s, it has grown into an industry. The introduction of the processing of dead stocks into finished products like laminated and framed crafts, has become a remarkable development of the industry.

In a study made in 2002 by three undergraduate students from MSC—Rochelle Montemayor, Cherry Fuentebella and Magdalen Valera jacks—they indicated a positive outlook for the butterfly industry of the province.

According to their study, the industry generated an estimated sale of about P1.05 million from export of pupa and deadstock by exporters in Marinduque in 2001.

Exported pupa, based on the records of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of the DENR, increased from only 4,811 pupa exported in 1991 to 71,068 in 1992 and 153,064 in 1993.

More recent figures from the Marinduque Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, show the province's exports of butterfly pupa and deadstock have substantially risen the last three years.

The volume was 374,400 in 2003, 644,400 in 2004 and 974,720 in 2005.

No records are available on export values.

Cultured butterflies

In a paper by Jason Weintraub of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, USA, he stated that studies of the lifecycle of butterflies in the tropical rainforest led scientist to envisage industry "farms" where live butterflies are cultivated under controlled conditions to provide supply of pupae.

Weintraub wrote a Malaysian entomologist, David Gock, pioneered butterfly farming in the 80s.

It is labor-intensive but has resulted in large-scale production of parasite-free pupae for export.

Dr. Carlos J. Andan, MSC vice president for research and extension, says with growing interests of many people to venture into butterfly farming and the development of producers and market for this commodity there is now a need to identify the species of butterflies in the wilder area and their host plants to maintain production and to compete with other countries in exports.

"In the butterfly industry, sustainability is a function of diversity of butterfly species and their host plants, he says.

"Each kind of butterfly feeds only on one specific plant and the female butterfly will lay her eggs only on the plant food use," Andan adds.

He has been advocating for the establishment of a National Butterfly Research Center in the province to support and reinforce the province's butterfly farmers with their production.

Products

According to traders, butterfly products range from deadstocks or papered adult butterflies used in cylinders and encased on frames; pupa and livestock for release during special occasions; and butterfly houses in parks, tourist spots, museums and recreation centers.

Deadstocks are also used to manufacturing décor products such as lampshades, clocks, and paper weights, among other items.

"With the developments in butterfly farming, people should now have a new way of looking at the forest. People like butterfly enthusiasts are certain to discover that there is much else they can steadily obtain from the natural regeneration if protected, managed and utilized wisely. The forest is a far more valuable resource that is non-consumptive for our eco-tourists. Local leaders are helping show people the way as it is in Marinduque," adds Andan.

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Road then less traveled by bankers proved to be gold mine

Story of a rural bank that started half a century ago

By Peter Lu Jalbuna
PEARLNorthern Luzon Bureau

PESCA

Child of the rural financial institution's founders.

SAN FERNANDO CITY — TECHNOLOGY gamble. If a client sees you on the gambling table, he will always think you are gambling with his deposits."

The advice still rings true in the mind of Jose Bliser, president and chief executive officer of Rizal Rural Bank. It was given to him by his late father, Rodolfo, long before the latter took over the helm of Bacnotan's most successful rural bank.

The young Bliser, a 1973 economics graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University obeyed his father and stayed away from gambling, developing instead a liking for sports like golf which he often took friends at a golf course in the Subic Freeport for station hosts.

In the 1990s, Bliser came to him on how to run a bank efficiently and how to make it cooperative to the needs of the times.

The advice also served to a great knowledge for Bliser as he steering the bank. Savvy gamble with the clients' money by going into ventures other than those related to improving the socio-economic life of the people in the countryside.

Hence the fulfillment of that mission is the secret of our success in Rang-ay," Bliser tells the listeners.

"We live up to our name," he says. Rang-ay is the Ilocano word for cooperate.

The initiative in politics to another one in countryside banking in the Ilocos region, Pangasinan and the Cordillera, Rang-ay set up in 1956, rises to be "presidente" in its class.

With everything else rosy, Rang-ay Bank has entered the countries, the "hard-working bank," as it puts no longer office hours, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., without noon breaks, and opens on Saturdays. Most Manila-based banks operate 9 a.m. - three or 4 p.m. and are closed on Saturdays.

Humble beginnings

The only gambling Rang-ay Bank was involved in was that done by its founders when they decided to put up a bank in the countryside—then considered a non-viable enterprise.

"But our pioneering incorporators were imbued with a sense of mission to serve the farmers, fishers folk, market vendors, even ordinary employees," Bliser, now in his early fifties, says.

Rang-ay Bank's first depositors and borrowers came from those sectors that were not considered "bankable" by financial institutions by then.

The first branch was in the old Bliser ancestral home in Gov. Garcia Road in San Fernando.

Supporters from the surrounding towns and villages would come to the bank carrying their wares in huge bayong (native bags) ready of coconut (tuba), laden with fish, vegetables and even live chickens, says Bliser, quoting his mother, Gabriela, the bank's main.

There were only two banks in La Union at that time: Rang-ay Bank and the government-owned Philippine National Bank. But even with only one competitor, it was hard to convince people to deposit their money with Rang-ay, Bliser says.

Birth pains

Rang-ay Bank experienced the usual pains of growing up in its first years. But it has a built-in advantage. The good name of Bliser's family who founded the bank. His grandfather, Antonio Quirol, a native of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, was San Fernando's first town doctor, while his grandmother, Ramona Tavera Quirol, was a civic leader of Agoo, La Union.

Soon depositors and borrowers came rushing in and increased in number. Eventually, Rang-ay Bank opened its second branch in Am. 12, 1956 with five employees, grew and was ready to expand to other areas where its services were needed.

Bliser's father, Rodolfo, a businessman and former member of the Del Pilar Municipal Board, founded Rang-ay Rural Credit and pioneered management. He also served as collector, inspector and appraiser.

Bliser's mother, Barbosina, was the Gabriela who doubled as cashier, while Lorenzo Flores was the bookkeeper. Their daughter, Carmelita was the secretary. The bank could not afford to hire a security guard.

Less traveled road

Needless to say, what other financial lines included is a less traveled road countryside bank-ing proved to be Rang-ay's gold mine.

In 1982, with more confidence and more dependence and business, the bank moved to a more spacious building in the city.

Four years, the Central Bank granted it the authority to accept demand deposits, making it one of the countryside's rural banks to offer such facility.

Several years later, it was given the authority to offer other services like granting loans to small and medium entrepreneurs, farmers, especially those engaged in tobacco production.

For its operational efficiency and phenomenal growth, Rang-ay Bank was awarded by the Central Bank as one of the "outstanding rural banks" in 1975.

Years later, as it continued its growth in countryside banking, Rang-ay Bank would receive awards like the golden award of excellence bestowed on it by Bagong PCI Bank, the Gov. 36, 2003, the bank was elected as the most outstanding countryside b. 2003, its branch in Bauang in central mobilization in the Ilocos and the Cordilleras.

For 18 years from 1986 to 2003, it was also cited by the Land Bank of the Philippines as the most outstanding participating financial institution of the countryside-based bank.

In 1978, Rang-ay Bank opened its first extension office at the site of the old market in this city, a walking distance away from its main office.

Computerization

In October of the same year, the bank, with three bank graduates 23-year-old Jose taking over as president and manager, began computerizing its operations, the first rural bank in Northern Luzon to do so.

In 1982, with more employees and more dependents

Shares buy back

FOR MOST COMPANIES, ADDITIONAL stockholders mean more money.

But as the number of part owners of a business increases, so does the paper work needed to handle the equity contributions.

The law requires all stockholders to be notified of important developments in the company. Their consent has to be sought before certain decisions can be made by management.

A stockholder who owns, for example, 1.0 shares, has the same voting and motion rights as another who owns 10 percent of the company.

If the holders of small number of shares are numerous and live far from the company's principal office, the task of complying with the notice requirement can be tedious and expensive.

To cut down on administrative costs, some companies offer to buy back the holdings of small stockholders, with a premium sometimes indeed on to make it attractive.

It's up to the stockholder concerned to decide whether to accept the buyout or hold on to his shares to enjoy the benefits of its dividends, if any.

Cost management

The right of a company to buy back small stockholdings was the subject of a recent query in the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The company, which is listed in the stock exchange, plans to write directly to its stockholders and offer to buy back the shares that are below board lot (999 shares and below) for purposes of efficiency and cost management.

The company checked with the SEC to find out if its plan is covered by the mandatory tender offer rule of the Securities Regulation Code.

Essentially, the rule states that "any person or group of persons acting in concert, who intends to acquire 35 percent or more of equity shares in a public company" should disclose that intention and offer to buy the shares of holders of that class of shares in the course of the planned acquisition.

The rule aims to level the playing field among the stockholders when a third party wants to buy a big chunk of a company's stocks.

Market price

The opportunity to sell should be made available to all similarly situated stockholders and not only to select stockholders who may be privy to the plans of or have been approached by the buyer for that purpose.

The SEC said the subject scheme is not covered by the tender offer rule.

Corporate Securities Info
Raoul J. Palabrica

The transaction is governed by the "tender offer by the issuer/buy back" rules which allow a company to reacquire a specific class of shares for any of the following purposes:

• To implement a stock option or stock purchase plan;

• To meet short-term obligations which can be settled by the re-issuance of the repurchased shares;

• To pay dissenting or withdrawing stockholders who are entitled to the payment of their shares under the Corporation Code; and

• Such other legitimate corporate purposes.

The SEC declared the objectives behind the proposed action, which uses "below board lot" as the benchmark in determining who should be covered by the buy back, can be considered a legitimate corporate purpose.

The agency, however, emphasized that the offer should be at the market price of the shares during the buy back period. This requirement was laid down to protect the interests of the affected stockholders.

Since the shares are publicly traded, the data on the market price can be easily obtained from the stock exchange.

Retained earnings

As in all instances when the law allows the redemption, repurchase or buy back of shares, the SEC stated that the company should have sufficient unrestricted retained earnings to its coffers to finance that action.

Unrestricted retained earnings refer to the "excess of the assets of the corporation over its liabilities including the amount of the legal capital."

The requirement on the kind or source of funds that can be used in the buyback is designed to **shield a) preserving the company's creditors.**

Since the corporation's assets constitute a "trust fund" to which creditors look up to for the payment of their advances, expenses that are not in the ordinary course of business (like a shares buy back) should be funded from sources other than the company's legal capital.

The records on file with the SEC showed the company that made the query had more than enough money in its coffers to offset the buy back without putting its creditors at risk. For feedback, write to quisticalp@inquirer.com.ph/

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LARRY OCAMPO trains part-time for Subic Ironmaster triathlon

BUSINESS Monday

Hitting the wall but not giving up

Pre-need exec relies on mental strength to carry him and his firm forward

LARRY and Adrian Ocampo

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

ENDURANCE ATHLETES REFER to it as "the wall."

It is that part of the long, arduous race where the athlete, nearly a winner, runs out of strength, and the feeling is comparable to hitting a brick wall—you just cannot take another step.

With muscles aching, and mental powers sapped, athletes do give up and fall by the wayside.

But there are those who ignore what their body is begging them to do and countermand on pacing case but in front of the color until the second wind comes along and takes them to the end of their journeys.

PET Plans Inc. president Lorenzo T. Ocampo knows what it's like to come up against "the wall," being a triathlete—he runs, cycles and swims.

"At that point, your mind takes over because your body has already reached its physical limitations," Ocampo tells Inquirer. "I just tell myself to keep on moving and go on, one little step at a time."

Ocampo says an athlete's body if he comes up against the wall just runs in a long race and the mental mind overrun in quickly.

Sometimes, "the wall" comes up more than once, and the much-needed second wind, or that surge of new strength, never comes.

But no matter how many times Ocampo has faced "the wall," he is proud to say that he has almost always managed to reach the finish line, even if it means swimming for 3.8 kilometers, cycling for another 180 and then running the last 42 kilometers.

"I did join an adventure race many years ago and my partner and I could not climb the rock wall no matter how we tried as we had never taken climbing lessons," he says.

"We tried until my arms turned to Jello but failed. We've since learned how to climb and joined a few more races. Rock walls are no longer an issue," he adds.

He will need that dogged determination as he faces another type of "wall" in his job as president of a pre-need company.

With the industry hurt by sharp drops in sales because of the financial disasters that hit two of the biggest players in the industry, he is hard pressed to find ways to keep the company trending forward.

It's probably safe to bet on Ocampo succeeding at his task as he has never run away from a challenge.

One of the first came his way in 1986 when he was asked to help push ahead the Imelda Cojuangco Ipsen of Unilever, then named Philippine Refining Corp.

As brand assistant, the George, now University graduate had to go around mini-mart stores and other retail outlets to encourage them to carry his product.

He says the work gave him the opportunity to better know the kind of people that his unusual grandfather, the revered Don Lorenzo Tañadu, served all his life.

He explains that while he and the rest of the Tañadu clan were always involved during elections as in democratizations, he did not really get the chance to know the "masa" well.

"I realized that they really know their stuff. They were very competent at what they do," Ocampo says.

"That intimate knowledge of what the lower to middle-income markets want from Unilever served Ocampo well in the five years that he stayed with Unilever.

From Unilever, he moved on to Interbe Business and Supermarket, which was the biggest brand in Unilever's arsenal at that time, as brand manager.

"I was really motivated there. They set very high standards and it was very tough," Ocampo says. "Many of its CEOs were dropped down but I also managed to pass in winners."

He was on his way to bigger things at Unilever, but he resigned in 1990 and asked his father, the late Adrian V. Ocampo, if he could join him at PET Plans, which the elder Ocampo set up in 1988 with partners, including Tañadu.

"I asked him if I could join because the business was growing quite quickly and I wanted to help," Ocampo says.

The two Ocampos renewed the company through highs and lows and it gave the younger Ocampo the opportunity to see his father in a different light.

"He has always been involved in so many things, like manufacturing, building and selling real insurance, and through it all he looked like he was having fun," he says.

It was not all fun, he realized, as there are definite downsides to a pre-working for his father.

"Sometimes, you side up the relationship of father and son with employee and superior and he can be quite intense," he says.

Then there is also the perception that he only got his job because he is the son of the owner, but he has learned early on to go beyond it and just concentrate on his work.

He is also his own man, not a shadow of his late father, of whom he is proud.

"Our personalities are very different. He is very good at relating with people. He can immediately connect with them," he says. "I am more deliberate and I can not easily put on the charm."

Their personalities may be different, but they complement and the partnership worked well until late last year when the elder Ocampo passed away.

Ocampo had to take over all of the reins of PET Plans and also heads as the operations of other companies—Petnet, involved in the remittance business; and 88 Ocampo and Associates, an insurance brokerage firm.

Since then he has been taking difficult but necessary steps to ensure the survival of the pre-need firm. Branches were cut from as much as 138 to just 62, 20 percent of the work force was let go and costs cut—all because the pre-need industry is just 40 percent of what it was three years ago.

Sales have been hard to come by because potential customers were spooked by the inability of the country's top pre-need firms to pay their obligations to plan holders.

Ocampo says PET Plans is not about to renege on its obligations to its plan holders enjoying it has a large enough trust fund to cover its financial obligations.

He, however, says with business conditions as they are, it will be very difficult for the industry itself to survive. The Industry Regulator is still looking at the Securities and Exchange Commission for some leeway to allow them to continue and remain profitable.

Ocampo, thus, joined face to face with another "wall," this time in business. And like on the track, he relies on his mental strength to carry him and his company forward.

He never gave up before, and he's not about to start now.

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P28

30-foot Marian statue rises in QC

On May 31, Regina Rosarii Center for Contemplative Prayer will formally unveil Joe Barcena's magnificent statue of Our Lady of La Naval

A VIEW from the deck of the Regina Rosarii Center for Contemplative Prayer shows the artist ornamenting the Lady's halo.

SCULPTOR Barcenajuan's final touches Marian sculpture with the crown of the Lady's halo.

By Gino Dimmayuda
Correspondent

IN WHAT COULD BE the most fitting way to close the Marian month of May, the Regina Rosarii Center for Contemplative Prayer, run by the Dominican Sisters of Regina Rosarii (OP Regina), with the support of the Regina Rosarii Contemplative Association, will formally unveil Joe "Joe" Barcena's magnificent statue of Our Lady of La Naval May 31.

The 30-foot statue is the biggest yet dedicated to the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, who was believed to have aided the easily outnumbered Spanish-Filipino fleet in the historic naval battles in the 17th century against the superior Dutch invaders. The victory of the defenders was recognized as a miracle, hence the title Our Lady of La Naval.

The statue stands in a private property on Scout Fernandez, Brgy. Laging Handa, a street's throw from bustling Tomas Morato Avenue in Quezon City.

It is the latest in remembrance of the Dutch-based sculptor who has created a number of Madonnas in Naga City, Tarlac, Rizal, Mati in Davao Oriental, Tagum in Davao del Norte, Tagaytay and Cavite City.

A Fine Arts major in painting, alumnus of the University of Santo Tomas, the 51-year-old Barcena has worked in close partnership with Sr. Egide Reed, founder of the Dominican Sisters of Regina Rosarii, the congregation behind the Regina Rosarii Shrines in Tagaytay and Tagbilaran.

After Barcena "who have envisioned a sanctuary of contemplative silence in the heart of a business district, an eloquent reminder that God is indeed present and truly alive in the midst of all the noise pollution that is now one of the most serious nuisances of our time."

Born in Naga City, Barcena grew from a mostly skeptical youth to religious. As a child, he was exposed to his grandmother's, as well as the town's, fealty to Our Lady of Peñafrancia, whose pilgrim processions lured up for young imaginations. His grandmother and grandfather both named Federico, were lay dressmakers-sculptors.

In college, the then budding sculptor carved Benjamin the bust of Pope John Paul II. Another piece on the Pope, which won first prize in a contest using local material, became part of a diorama on the Pope's life and is now exhibited in the Vatican.

A Marian devotee himself, Barcena worked feverishly on the statue, erecting it shell a few days before the merchants of devotion Daughter, he draped her figure and reinforced it with steel and iron to withstand strong weather. At the base of the Lady, a chorus of cherubim flutes amid a splash of shining clouds.

One unique feature of the statue is that it stands on a fully rotating pedestal, capable of turning 360 degrees, thanks to an electrical mechanism the sculptor has devised. The statue's towering presence can be surrounding area is visible to everyone, including the high-rise structures of the two major TV networks.

(The Tagaytay Marian Shrine Barcena built earlier is a testament to his landscape savvy, and to mention his unique gifts to bring out the best features of an already setting.)

The Dominican prayer center's interior also, located by the building extension, has another cocoon of the same: a wonderful, impressively unmodified retablo, featuring unusually hand-filigree etching presented by light-ing fixtures conducive to contemplation and meditation. Sprawled around are oversized chairs pillows for sitting and meditation.

Reinforced to become the permanent home of Our Lady in this city, the Regina Rosarii Center for Contemplative Prayer is a sacred space, a sanctuary of silence, source of hope, where peace and harmony, caressed by the magnificence of God's creation, shall reign.

At St. Dominic himself said, "Our preaching is the sharing of our contemplative heights, the fruits of our contemplation, to the poor and broken."

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"WAKING Up From a Car Crash," by Espiritu

"SATURDAY Evening... Down the Drain Again," by Espiritu

"DANCING Towards Oblivion with Tragedy on Our Heels," by Cris Espiritu

Between wet dreams and waking hours

"BICOCHET," by Balbuenos

"THE BIRB Making Hours of an Redemption Junkie," by Espiritu

By Constantine C. Tejero

A TRUE HEROIN FOR ART AND Surrealism usually appears in the works of upcoming young artists. There's something about their untainted imagination, a willingness to seize and learn, akin to rebellion, that always appeals to the young.

That interesting note is seen in Jason Balbuena and Cris Espiritu's joint exhibit "Infantile Fix," 19 pieces in oil on canvas, until May 30 in Blue Moon Art Gallery, 1034 Lanuza St., Bangkal, Makati City.

This is edgy art: art inspired from the young. Both Fine Arts graduates from University of Santo Tomas, Balbuena has spent years in the show while Espiritu for 12.

If the former's art appears inspired by fashion magazine illustration, the latter's resembles editorial cartoons. Both works can't be far from Pedro Bi.

Balbuenos depicts young women so-lost-in-dreaming as if in a fashion shoot à la trendies, particularly in "Bittersweet Virtues" and "Dreaming in Stripes." She uses flat, clear, unmodeled colors à la Wonderama or Rosenquist.

Sometimes the imagery verges on soft porn, as in "Soft Shoes," "Rejection," "Thieves of the Heart." But this is deceptive, because Balbuenos's point of subjects, looking directly at the viewer as if in a duel or challenge, are actually some determination of the "women of Big, says Pedro and Egan Schiele.

Watch out. They're no victims of sexual exploitation or sensationalism, but could be the entertainers down-and-out—some budding homeschicks.

While Balbuenos's dominant tone is to a cool realism, Espiritu turns to sheer excitement. Against planes of mushy colors, flake-green, gray, umber, ochre, red, gold, the artist unleashes his surrealism by floating or dribbling off figures that are more cartoonish than lifelike.

He is obviously influenced by Dali—not the Dali of "The Crucifixion" or "The Last Supper" but the Dali of "Sleep" or "The Persistence of Memory."

His art thrives on irresistible images with corresponding titles that would just as amused. "The Birth of Waking Hours of an Endorphin Junkie," "Like M. Stripe I Don't Sleep... I Dream," "Dancing To wards Oblivion with Tragedy on Our Heels," "Saturday Evening... Down the Drain Again," "Waking up from a Car Crash," "Subconscious Tripping with Georgia," "A Beautiful Collapse."

His world is populated by demons, grotesk figures, snow and rubber, coconut cocoa, disembodied angel wings, and other surrealistic metaphors or female fake fur heads—replete with Freudian slips and tongue motifs.

Says the exhibit note: "The primitive poses of Balbuenos's feline models and the way dozens of limbs like coiled tentacles are a result to emotional resistance as well as an indulging cocktail of rites of mystic. One is instantly caught up in the middle of the well-posed countenances and confusing glances of the artists' subjects, which are alternately reminiscent of glossy glamour magazine photo shoots and lampoon comic strip characters.

"Between them, Balbuenos and Espiritu entangle the viewer in tensions that are as unsettling as they are familiar. Caught between wet dreams and eerie waking hours, the heart of this tormented batch is up to a backpedal."

By the look of it, "Infantile Fix" must be an exhibit produced by party animals. While Balbuenos's art seems like a product of a fashionista, Espiritu's is of street drinker.

The former is a tease, the latter a hangover. Just bring open The Factory with

"DOLL House," by Jared Balbuenos

'Rhapsody' exhibit

THE SOCIAL SERVICES Committee of the House of Representatives with Cluster Supervision Solicitor presents "Rhapsody 2," an exhibition celebrating life and love.

The exhibit features works by various established and emergent artists such as Angel Cacnio, Ramon Orlina, Celso Balmes, Oscar Edmundo, Angelito Antonio, Jacob Dizon, Eduardo Castrillo, Abel Reyes, Jerusalem Santos, Lydia Velasco, Fred Ramirez, Marcel Antonio, Emmanuel Garibay, Michael Cacnio, Noel Olivenio, Bernice Brito, Auro Urbanista, Elias Santos and Bin Santos.

The show will benefit the Philippine Mental Health Association and Pondahan on Wheels. The exhibit runs through June 10 at the Araneta Building lobby of the Batasang Pambansa. Call 9390715 or 9390716.

"CHIBUBU," by Caloy Quiroz

"HARVEST," by Oscar Zalamanka

A harmony of art and music

By Joanna Marie Grace Ramos
Contributor

THE OPENING OF "La Musique II" enchanted guests as it merged music and the visual arts at the Galeria Joaquin Ibiza in Ayala Alabang.

The perceptible balance of the two art forms proved obvious from the beginning, heralding the ribbon-cutting ceremony were artist Jovanni Lucas, who was very recently awarded with the Presidential Medal of Merit, and pianist Paul Jamiro, both internationally acclaimed artists.

"La Musique II" opened in connection with National Heritage Month, saw four renditions of classical pieces by soprano Josephine Romero and tenor Froilan Asuncion.

Timeless compositions by Silvano Abalos and Lucio San Pedro were rendered by highly respected musicians such as pianist Dr. Dolores Lucas and Cecile Perlas, violinist John Lenon, and Edith Jones Reyes and tenor Jo Jones.

As finale, Asuncio played a heartfelt rendition plus a suite of music from the Broadway musical "My Fair Lady," which left the audience clamoring for more.

"La Musique II" consists of a fine collection of artworks from 22 artists who make unique contributions of music to our country.

Jerry Elorduy's surreal oil-on-canvas pieces are extraordinary. His "46" (120" "Muralla" stands out. The Mindanao figures he has come to be known for and classical favorite of musical instruments, cropped to reveal only their upper bodies and encumbered by the lowers to signify a weight on all of his.

Landscape impressionist Eddy Tejero's "Musig ng Bukid" and "Alamid" are a superb showing of a woman in her youth playing a violin and an old lady remembering about having played the violin during her younger days.

Another interesting piece is Bernard Shaw's 47"

"MARIMBA" by Bayani Rada

"YOUTH Man," by Angel Cacnio

JOHN Lenon

"BLACK and White Colors," by Vincent de Pio

Elvin Ererario's acrylics on canvas such as "Sardinas to Oblivion" are exquisite.

In his portraits of colleagues, Vincent de Pio, the inaugural featured artist, plays around robust colors of earth tone or simple hues of black and white. His works are highly treasured.

Eighty expressive are the works of National Artist Arturo Luz, whose linear and geometric sculptures can be as colorful and swinging.

Isaac's, Mia's Social and Lydia Velasco also render their personal interpretations of music: graceful, festive, contemplative. Their works, in short, serve reason to adore.

VISUAL ARTS

"CARPOOL," by LaFrancis

LaFrancis at West Gallery

Joseph LaFrancis presents his new works in acrylic and drawings under the "One Mind Coming," until June 10, at West Gallery, Mary Stella Antonio, Mandaluyong, Quezon City. Call 4115100/4115221 and 3771194.

"CHOPPER," by Manansingan

Group exhibit

"Kaisa Mandaue," an art exhibit featuring the Mandaue Painters Group, opens on May 30, 4-6 p.m. at Kamayan Restaurant, 357 Pres. Quezon St., Guadalupe, Mandaue City. Call 7115373 or 0920-9017284.

Back-to-back exhibits

On June 1, Karen Quiogue Rivera's "Inside-Outsiders" and Rosel Soler Gutierrez's "Apocryphal" will be the movers of the Fronsee Art Gallery and West Gallery, respectively. Both exhibits will run until June 13. Both galleries are at the 4/F, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. Call 6342479 or 6342389.

"Wiffle Gal—Dad's Last Visit," by Roel Soler Cuizon

Sculptors at West

"Lasangly Sinasangly: Fusion Objects of Wonderment and Terror" features sculptures by Abe Lincoln Chavez, Mark Tanaguchi, Ruel San Jose, Lowrey Abes, Cynthia Alexander, Tuman Lee, and Ray Ghelfuso, and collaborative objects by Arabar, Caz Hildalgo and Leo Rodriguez, Jocelyn Cerdeña, Ka Vacia and Gladdy Phoenix. Six-month objects that will perish over time ranging from the sentimental to the elusive, the kalasa, the decadent and even the shocking. The exhibit will run until June 10 at the West Gallery Sculpture Room, Mercurio Building, 4/F West Ave., Quezon City. Call 4114000, 7731100 or 4114029.

Ventura at Ateneo

"Divine Encounters," an exhibit of works by 2005 Ateneo Art Awards winner Rodell Ventura, runs until July 23 at the Ateneo Art Gallery, 3/F Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, QC. Ventura was the first recipient of the Ateneo Art Gallery Sydney Vitanki Residency Grant. He produced the MFA-finished landscapes and cityscapes, the paintings, skeletons, toy figures and a mini-book. Call 4266488.

"BAGUIO at Sunset," by Jocelyn

Doctolero at Crucible

The Crucible Gallery presents a solo exhibit of watercolor by Ferdinand Doctolero, on May 30 at 6 p.m. "Look-N-Feel Tao: Scenes of Urban Wear" (in over the "Against the Grain" series) will showcase paintings by watercolor and pen-and-ink on paper. The exhibit will run until June 11 at the Crucible Gallery, A-F Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. Call 6384081.

Gaerlan at Crucible

"Life with Mother-of-Pearl," a debut exhibition by printmaker Poul Gaerlan, will open on June 17, 6 p.m., at the Crucible Gallery. The sculpture collection showcases original designs, mixed almost like mosaics, with another art piece as an exotic material. The exhibit will run until June 29. Call 6384081.

Group exhibit at Pasig Museum

"Inter Journeys 2" features the mixed works of members of the Sandigan Group, a non-partisan artists' organization committed to the pursuit of self-realization and selfless service to humanity. Artists include Carlo Ramolete, Jose Acuzar, Wilson Limon, Ramoleteen Jyssa Fernando and others. The exhibit runs until tomorrow at Pasig City Museum. Call 6433211.

Doctor at Power Plant

Artist Edgar Doctor is featured in the exhibit "Tributes to the Arts," opening on June 3, 6 p.m., Shell Grant, Power Plant Mall.

"Still Tip Love: Orange Cloud," by Emily Syip Chiog

Emily Syip Chiog presents her solo exhibit "Untouchable Affairs" until June 8, on the 2/F, Museum Gallery, Ayala Museum. Call 8131800 or 8159851.

EQ Diapers Bonggang Binyagan

The recently held EQ Bonggang Binyagan inspired hundreds of babies in Metro Manila, Davao, Cebu, Dagupan, and Iloilo. In Metro Manila, there were 132 babies baptized in Fernwood Gardens with Tin-Tin Reynoso Bubuco as one of the symbolic godparents. Moms and babies alike were beaming with joy as they were welcomed into the world of Christianity. The blessed babies also got to take home EQ diaper giveaways. This was truly a memorable occasion for loyal users of EQ diapers.

In photos are, clockwise from left: Councilor Antonio Inton of 4th district QC, Eugene Go of EQ Hygoods, Christine Marcelo Bubuco & Pastor Ramirez as symbolic godparents and the Lucky EQ-Mom & baby

One of the hundreds of babies baptized in EQ Bonggang Binyagan.

Lucky EQ Mom & Baby, Godparents and Fernwood priests.

Congratulations to
Ms. Sally F. Aldaba
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[28]Visita Iglesia Heritage Walking Tour on May 30-31 when private homes like the Jaro[Iloilo-Lopez] ancestral home open their doors.

TRADITIONAL musicians perform for Heritage Month.

TAGBILARAN church's ceiling

Heritage Month closes in Iloilo

HERITAGE IS ON THE forefront for the entire month of May each year when the National Heritage Month presents a variety of its provinces that spring from our multifaceted Philippine culture.

The opening event May 1 was a concert by pianist Cecile Licad at the exquisite San Agustin Church in Paoay Ilocos Norte), an outstanding Philippine property designated by the UNESCO World Heritage List because of its uniqueness and universal value.

The value of Heritage Month is that it brings out the continuum that is at the root of Philippine culture.

Religious rituals were and continued in silence. Dancing, music, music and dance are performed worldwide and they are rich.

The ceremonies that are essentially enhances the music, as the concert in San Agustin in Paoay brought back a forgotten dimension—that churches are truly musically associated very good music such as Bach's and Mozart's sacred music, and especially our very Miss Barbosana composed in Barlaylon Church (Bohol) and religious music composed by Asiones.

Heritage month organized me to and walking tours, convincing visitors to open their heritage homes to visitors. Lalong Iloilo can walked people through many historic in the province, served the delicacies and luncheon recipes normally prepared in those homes, and entertained guests with dances in heritage living rooms in the town square from a historical cinema-type would have done.

Heritage bridges are what Heritage Month achieves to us, too. It shows that no heir of heritage clouds about, that architecture, art, music, dance, dance, costumes, cuisine, and tradition all could coexist...and bid together, rather than single they tell the Philippine-story much better.

Architectural Bermudez, shows how this has boosted many nothing competitions. Photo, bubble and art exhibits have also been showing in cities nationwide. A series of things commemorated. The necklace of Spanish colonial lighthouses still standing in the furthest reaches of the Philippine archipelago. A book and photo exhibit of lighthouses were also launched.

Traditional and modern homes, hand-loomed by functioned tribal and lowland weavers from various parts of the country, were demonstrated and shown, some turned into stunning contemporary fashion.

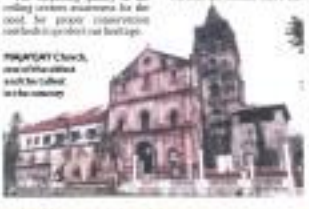
In Bacolod, Silay and Bago cities in Negros Occidental, exhibits featured the community of old land (textile) and agrarian (architecture) of ancestral homes—delicate objects, personal jewelry, religious objects, books, on heirloom furniture the heirlooms showed from a century ago.

Heritage month is concerned to a month-long festival highlighting cultural heritage of a nation that is enough for cultural activities. Various facets of Philippine culture such as images, music and dance performances, visual arts, exhibits, culinary events, art and design competitions, walking tours, and much more are offered.

The activities are an enjoyable way to advocate for heritage, fostering awareness on endangered heritage, surrounding heritage homes, and bringing either outstanding heritage examples or successful conservation efforts all over the country to public awareness.

An extraordinary feature not really known to the public is the centuries-old ceiling painting by artist Reynaldo Pelaeta of Lubog Church in Bohol. The handsome of the robin motif from sacred canon mainstays by the artist which artist to the Filipino's talent.

The surprising quality of the ceiling centers awareness for the need for proper conservation methods to protect our heritage.



MAJESTIC Church, one of the oldest and the tallest in the country

WORLD Heritage Site, Agustin Church in Paoay is a magnificent setting for a Cecile Licad concert.

DETAILS in a Tagbilaran church ceiling

Although yearly Philippine heritage is endangered, all is not lost. Endeavors to many heritage advocacy and conservation programs are often more successful outside of Manila. The work of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation in circumventing steel protection the coastal towns in southern Cebu is an outstanding example.

The success of Iloilo heritage advocacy is the result of activities by a group of committed individuals who are working harmoniously with Mayor Jerry Treñas. Iloilo's is an example other the rest of the country can emulate.

In a telling tribute to Philippine heritage, Iloilo opens its doors to heritage lovers to events to cap Heritage Month.

On May 30, Monsie Gay's Fiesta Iloilo ensemble and a seaside will welcome participants to a grand wedding tour of Iloilo mansions—the Heritage Expo. Admission is open. Visit Iloilotourism.com for heritage homes, and be the Iloilo-ness Islander Museum.

In the evening, the Boogie comrade "Pasa Gagmo en Dinamyo Jog Boogie" will be performed.

On May 31, the walking tour continues to Molo Church and Convent, the Molo Museum, Festa Dinamyo House, and the heritage bakery Panaderia de Molo.

A Fiesta de Plaza caps the afternoon, followed by troubadours singing sacred music from the College de San Agustin Archives during Mass at the San José Church.

In the evening, "Habal," a village in the Bisayan Visayas, will treat us to traditional cross, pagdayon (rodeo), together with songs and dances that burst into a fireworks display to conclude the 2006 National Heritage Month.

Heritage Watch

To jumpstart its new building at 103 T.M. Kalaw St. in Manila, Instituto Cervantes with all Spanish speakers to participate in the First Cervantes Public Reading of "Huh Hir Tongues," which begins at 3 p.m. on June 16. The reading will go on for 20 hours, ending in the morning of June 17.

Public readers up the participated club at midnight, in shorts, doctor are cheerleaders are invited to surprising and encouraging readers.

Some 250 readers are needed for the continuous reading. Pal yourself on the list by calling Instituto Cervantes at 526-4642-45, faxing 523-1445, or e-mailing consulado@cervantes.es.

Please e-mail comments and feedback to jo.la.plaza@gmail.com

'Soft-Shell' at Avellana

SIX VIEW UNTIL JUNE 3 AT AVELLANA ART Gallery is Mio Makiwan's "Soft-Shell."

Composed of tapestries and soft, organic sculptures, the exhibit straddles between that small, delicate space of an and craft. The aspect of craft a drawn noticed by the materials which are sewn together fabrics, objects in excess of fantasy geometric.

The art comes in the very considered selected color and texture that guided the artist in her placement and the geometric flourish. Craft students the tapestries in metaphysical lurch (conflict, the works are very personal her only in that conscious but in so in their conception.

Avellana Gallery is at G. IV. 2000 PB Hart ave. EL. Paso. Tel. (Nursing Galleon Academy). Call 8926307.

"4 FOLDS" (above) and "pipe" (far left)

LIFESTYLE

All the world's a stage

By Gibbs Cadiz

Of some 30 performances from all over the world that graced the Theater Olympics of the Nations held in Manila, here are five that thrilled and moved us

The Good Life Begins With A Healthy Life

Located just minutes away from the Santa Rosa exit of the South Superhighway, Ayala Westgrove Heights was deliberately designed to cradle the lived environment, to make even the fabric of breathe a pleasure to feel.

That's why one-half of the property (or about 200 hectares) is devoted to parks, gardens, and recreational areas, with the other half reserved for residential development. What it adds up to is one of the best integrated residential areas in the country today.

A place where you can breathe easily. Which, studies have discovered, has reduced occurrences of asthma attacks in children, encouraged the desire to engage in outdoor activities. And it's not magic. All the air in Westgrove is fresh. And that's a lot more than can be said in many so-called modern residential communities today.

But in spite of being far enough from the city to escape smog and pollution and congestion, Ayala Westgrove Heights is still near enough commercial centers, shopmens, churches, markets, and even premier schools like St. Scholastica's Westgrove, DOS' Canlubang, Chefboxx and Berlitz International School to make living here the new standard in living well.

AyalaLand PREMIER

At Ayala Westgrove Heights, air freshening doesn't come in cans.

Others call it refreshing. We call it the next big thing in living well.

It comes instead, from over 400 hectares of rolling green lush with orchards, groves and gardens. It comes from the way the land seems to cradle the winds from both mountain and woods. It comes as the fruit of painstaking attention to detail that maximizes and makes full use of open spaces. It comes from the fact that over 50% of the property has been devoted to parks, greenery and open spaces. And it all serves to make activities like fishing, jogging, strolling, biking, or just plain lazing around a true delight. One might even say that every breath is a pleasure at Ayala Westgrove Heights. Find out for yourself. Plan a visit today. And inhale. And exhale. And repeat.

AYALA Westgrove Heights

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The Russians are coming

By Fabio A. Tarrazo
Contributor

WHAT DO MAYA PLISETSKAYA, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Mikhail Baryshnikov have in common?

The great ballerina, the maestro pianist and the legendary cellist are all Russians and they have all performed for Filipino audiences in recent years.

Three Russias now have also performed with Filipino artists.

Filmmaker performed with our own Monica Barcelo in one fund-raising dance event to Guatemala. Spiridon performed Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Cecile Licad and Antonio Manzano in Spain. Baroque trio has performed many times with Licad to counterpoint or enliven orchestra music.

Again Licad is performing a Rhodes/Bach sonata with one of Russia's greatest living violinists, Viktor Pikhtoia, in the Lederman Beethoven Anniversary series.

The good news is that Manila's performing arts scene will once again be graced by great Russian artists and ensembles on June 14-16, according to Madam Ofelia Gimenez Sobrepeñera, first vice president of the Philippine Society Philippines-Russia Inc.

The series of performances will be called a festival of Russian culture in the Philippines. Ballet Philippines and San Miguel Philharmonic will perform with the Jazz Mijael Philharmonic under the baton of Felix Resurreccion.

The special cultural fest between Russia and the Philippines will be chronicled by Mindy Sioson Magsanoc, which will mark the first time Russian dance legends Anna Pavlova and violinist Nikolai Rubinstein set foot in Manila in the 1920s.

Call 9937138 or 9989851/136.

Peace Orchestra

Many are wondering whatever happened to the Peace Philharmonic Philippines (1995), which used to be the Cebu Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Well, the regular players are still alive and kicking and have just wrapped up a summer festival series from Cagayan de Oro to Cebu City.

In April and early this May, I caught up with two events of the PPP Chamber Players at the Cebu Waterfront Hotel Ballroom.

The April 23 concert featured guest conductor Eugene Fredrick Castillo conducting Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll" with Ingrid Sobrepeña-Lopez as soloist in the Grieg Piano Concerto (accompanied by a string quartet) and the Edward Elgar Cello Concerto.

Even with a small chamber group, Castillo managed to elicit a fine sound from the PPP Players and made "Siegfried Idyll" quite poignant in many parts (it was initially threatened by the sound of work tools) rehearsing in the adjacent ballroom.

Castillo's other highlight was the pairing of her talent in the Chopin E Minor Concerto, but it was in the Blackwood piano concerto that she showed her best in an unusual concerto that was low in the second movement and reading leaps in dirge-like passages toward the dramatic finale.

On May 7, I got the chance to see the group in a program of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K. 550, and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, again at the Waterfront Hotel Ballroom.

Conducted by Jeffrey Solmes, the Mendelssohn concerto with soloist Sara Maria Gonzalez was easily the evening's most memorable highlight. She closed with power and bring the first of the Mendelssohn melancholy inherent in the piece. Solmes gave her excellent support.

Santiniello, who has welcomed the musical growth of these young musicians, closed the third of through the PPP last season of its players to Manila-based orchestras and to schools abroad where the Cebu musicians easily qualified for scholarships; a few have remained to keep Cebu's classical music alive. They were sorely missed: many PPO players teach and have much studios of their own.

A regular partner in the PPP was outstanding is the Cebu Waterfront Hotel under Maria Fortuna.

"Without this venue sponsor," Fortuna announced, "we will be hard put to keep classical music alive on this part of the Visayas."

Here and there

Two-time Nominee for golden screen Gilbert Gallaga is still featured in a special solo recital at the Philamlife Theater on June 25, 4 p.m.

His program: Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 111 A flat Major, Op. 110; Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7 in B Flat Major, and Chopin's Sonata No. 2 in B Flat Minor, Op. 35. Call 8627150 or 6918.

DANCE Ballet soloist

6811136 for tickets.

Another outstanding product of the Philippine High School for the Arts, the battle Grand Master Willsmarie from Baguio City graduated summa cum laude with a music degree in Music Performance at the Lyon University Conservatory of Music in Florida on May 13. He was also in the honors dean with an honors degree in Applied Mathematics.

Indeed, every is a classic case of many scholars who persevere even without help from institutions that are supposed to take care of the country's youngsters.

UST SINGERS

UST Singers tour Taiwan

THE NATIONAL CONSERVATORY OF Culture and the Arts has given a great to the internationally acclaimed University of Santo Tomas Singers for its 1,200 international concert tour, which culminates in Taiwan, May 20-31.

The UST singers, under the baton of professor Fidel Ernest Calalang Jr. will present concerts at the National Concert Hall Taipei, Taipei Philharmonic Center Lounge, Taichung Chung Shan Concert Hall, Kaohsiung City Concert Hall and Hsinchu County Concert Hall.

Highlights of the tour are lectures on "Philippine Folk Songs in the Choral Repertoire" by Calalang, the Taiwan tours of the UST Singers is organized by the Taipei Philharmonic Association for Culture and Education under its strategic Sinchland Thing.

Earlier, the UST Singers toured South Korea and Singapore. They had a successful performance at the Esplanade Concert Hall in Singapore, May 14, before a packed audience of choral fans and enthusiasts where they received several standing ovations and obliged to encores for an encore. The event was graced by the Philippine Ambassador to Singapore, Belen Fabian-Sanchez.

Since 1962, the UST Singers have gone on 12 international concert tours and won over 45 top prizes in Europe, Canada, Ecuador and southeast Asia under the Conducting Department of the UST Conservatory of music. He won the first Conductor Prize at the Tolosa Choral Competition in the Netherlands.

All the world's a stage

From page C1

such as swearing (don't it would sound ...) out to the pits and seems a welcome long (silly) ingredients.

Samuel(l)'s fusion-language play (staged by Gela Colmenares), about "underdog" Filipinos with attitude who refuse home to live ill, spiteful mother, flies free and furious with quicksilver shifts in tone, emotion and insights into unbridled human relationships.

In the long-estranged mother and son comes to terms with each other's pressures, the fretful language and poignancies of kind the drags a pseudo, unhinged blend of sarcasm and affection worthy of an Almodovar movie.

"Why are you moving like cuckoo?" asks Bill to his.

"Why, you like the witches better?" counters his mother.

Behind the flaky of course, is a lifetime of regret and dissatisfaction.

"I wanted your affection," Alfredo says. "But, yes, offered me only indifference. Then I turned up your hatred. It's better than no affection at all, anyway."

Subconscious, children arising her voice are unfailingly drawing blood with her bladed maternal goodness, was astounding. Bedrock, too, was excellent, but "Regina Madre" was clearly his mother's show, and it's a festival overflowing with talent from so many countries, the platinum-haired dragonlady of an actress deserved every bit of the ovation she received at curtain call.

Olga Tañeclan. Remember her name.

Exhausting, exhilarating

Sifting through a two-week festival chock-full with performances is all gems imaginable, from a monologue (Lia Revista's "Prince" from Greece) to a storytale theater of a musical ("Something to Grow Above," by Catalan Alberto Conejero) to stage production of National artist Alejandro Roces' short stories on coal-fighting), could be exhausting.

Nevertheless, the embarrassment of finding several title surprises, like Tadeusz Kan's turn in "Regina Madre," Cecilia Colledge's Alberto Conejero's "Something to Grow Above" the biannual Chorus theatre into just found the globe, the raising drama groups from as far away as Ireland and Sudden Rain were how we perhaps the first and last time, so training them would be a thankless task to any director.

It would've been quite a loss, for instance, to miss "Six Rotten," an enthralling production by the Finnish theatre company Vitrina. Opening at 10 a.m., to a nearly empty house, Sunday's "Six Rotten" is the COZ "Six Rotten's" company of six actors joined by an opened-state play, about, yes, six actors in search of a play.

"Is this Oklahoma!?," quarks first line. "I mean, of course, the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville."

Stylized actors-cum-actors enjoy motion and with a room to a mythical company in Oklahoma that would have them as performers, and thus give their lives purpose and meaning.

It's the cliche-ism about dreamers hopping on to the locomotive of their dreams, but, as adapted from two Kafka stories, Vilma "No Return" (directed by Lithuanian Gintaras Grazulevicius) gained a wild universality by rendering its characters like clowns on a vast bare stage.

Dressed in crayon-colored clothes and party makeup, grossing like stones in a silent movie, they revealed the world of magic-tricks' genius (from Chaplin to Marcel Marceau to Gershwin) as the musical "Stop the World, I Want to Get off."

At the end of their journey, round from deep, they find themselves in another seemingly empty station. Is this the end?

Blinking in the light, once more frozen in their couples in the dead-light tableau that had opened the play, they begin to sing—hesitating, then bursting up into the tune. They sing, and unbelievably the heavens take up their song. Pardon blush. Once more great the gods were smiling at this festival.

Erudite monologue

Utterly against-the-grain was of a solo piece by Lia Revista, a Greek playwright-poet-actress. Lia Revista's stirring and erudite one-woman show, "Prince."

In this one-act play, a political prisoner, Nina, translates a cynical love sonnet behind bars for her cellmates (which equated racist bigotry. Alternating between moments of furies, guarded hope and bone-searing sadness, her story echoes and expands the ground covered by other epic hopeless political survival tales. Hallucinatory "Gate Letter to the Life of Juan Dreadwolf" or, more recently, Martin Sheen as in "Rose."

Like the protagonists in those works, Nina's ability to keep herself sane in the face of dehumanizing inhibitory exists on her grasp of memory, mnemonic, details.

"I know what date it is," she begins. "It is September the 29th. Email! The first thing to do every day when daylight comes into my prison cell, is to remember the

4.3 SCENE from Nikhil "The Rescue" from Finland

OLGA Bolshevichki of Russia's "Regina Madre"

4.3 SCENE from the contemporary argument of "The Coffee Shop within the Play (Unnamed Mall)"

date, and also the day. Today is Sunday."

Her sweet mind is a hallmark against the system's drive to efface her off the earth.

"We have run out of supplements," she recalls her roommate telling. "Will you sign a paper detailing pros, under cards, pertaining to a problem with a clash of systems, seems to torture and punish your anti-racial discrimination preaching, when we eat you here? Do stuff you get back to your cell to eat, and wait for Mister Death?"

And she sings, a grin cracking her mouth, "Hallelujah we tell him that Death is a lady in many languages and, therefore, in the air of many countries. In warm. La muerte. La mort. A mi la Alba amor[...]."

Imaginative staging

From Sudanese Fass's Theatre Le La Femme tells come "Three Sisters in Darwen," a play about women coping with rape, oppression and other losses of abuse. Its imaginative staging (by Jean Pierre Drake), done with the utmost sensitivity of African theatre and drama, placed the foreboding sight of female actors fervently pursuing the long-suppressed details of Muslim sisterhood, confronted the power of trans-colonial Christ to instruct us so much as delight.

Among all the festival entries, Burkina Faso's contribution felt closest to what the Philippines' stalwart Philippine Educational Theater Association (Peta) had been doing all these years.

But then, theatre could also be commercial, concerned about nothing so particular, and yet still be an interesting thing. "The Coffee Shop within the Play (Unnerving Mall)," a collaboration between Japan and the Philippines, proved this point with a vengeance.

Pillar initially appeared to be a play with its play-within-a-play-within-a-play-within-a-

JOHN Robert Powers students in 2005 talent show

Talent showcase

JOHN ROBERT POWERS will hold its final student invitational activity entitled "Revenue" to showcase the potential of its students before distinguished talent managers. The event activity the school is continuously pursuing to provide its students opportunities and recognition exposure.

The event will be held on two locations, June 10 and 11, 6:00 p.m., at the Cultural Rotunda Auditorium, Robinsons 9, PCBC, Alpha cor. Old Royal Ave., Makati City. The students will showcase their talents in hosting, runway, fashion print, TV commercial, talking, singing and dancing. At least 150 members are joining the talent show.

This activity is similar to the International Modeling and Talent Association (IMTA) competition held in Hollywood and New York every year where students of John Robert Powers Manila participated in and competed with majorettes, actors, dancers, and singers from all over the United States and other key states in the world.

Caged heat

From page B4

Cleaning, self-defense, Angela is fighting a homosexual inmate change and discovers that, in a filthy jail cell, her first act remarkable bottle is to keep her disguise intact.

It is not over, suspected felons and world crimes locally under for enabling conjoints and jail guards were fired, those she knowing called for the frustrations of their dead-end jobs.

Complicated the drugs-drawing prosecutions offenders are treated like criminals from the start, deprived of basic rights. Already stripped of privacy by fellow inmates in an initiation called "health inspection," abused by another, and prisoners older, and, thanks to overloaded court dockets and the lack of legal counsel, could spend years behind bars very beyond their sentence while waiting for their day in court.

Within its commercial road Filipino, the movie's screened language is a distinct tribute to how oppressive, painful and makeshift one's native tongue can be, no matter how coarse the discourse among prisoners.

Thus, the depersonalize of life inside prison can be fairly common knowledge; what can't go the stories that makes the intimate lots of individuals and more of individuals caught in circumstances not but limit their choices.

There is the battered wife who fought back only when her husband started abusing her children; the hold-up woman who knows of no other trade to support her family; the heartbreaking youngster[illegible] who must see her child needed more food, and three aging prostitutes consumed by life on the streets.

It is amazing how the author can make the ordinary reader empathize with such doubtful characters. Even if he makes us who give one trouble for allowing errant children to stay with their anxiety parents gets a bit bearing from literature.

As for Angela, life behind bars becomes even more complicated when she discovers she is pregnant again. Ramona challenges our long-held beliefs with provocative questions on whether women's rights should be given to women with their anxiety parents gets a bit bearing from literature.

As for Angela, life behind bars becomes even more complicated when she discovers she is pregnant again. Ramona challenges our long-held beliefs with provocative questions on whether women's rights should be given to women[illegible]

The writer doesn't say, but her novel's upbeat ending should tell us where her sympathies were, if given the novel's setting and premise, the optimistic might have been misplaced. But then again, you have to remind yourself that this is fiction; it only reads and feels like real life.

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Caged heat

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